

ADVENTURES

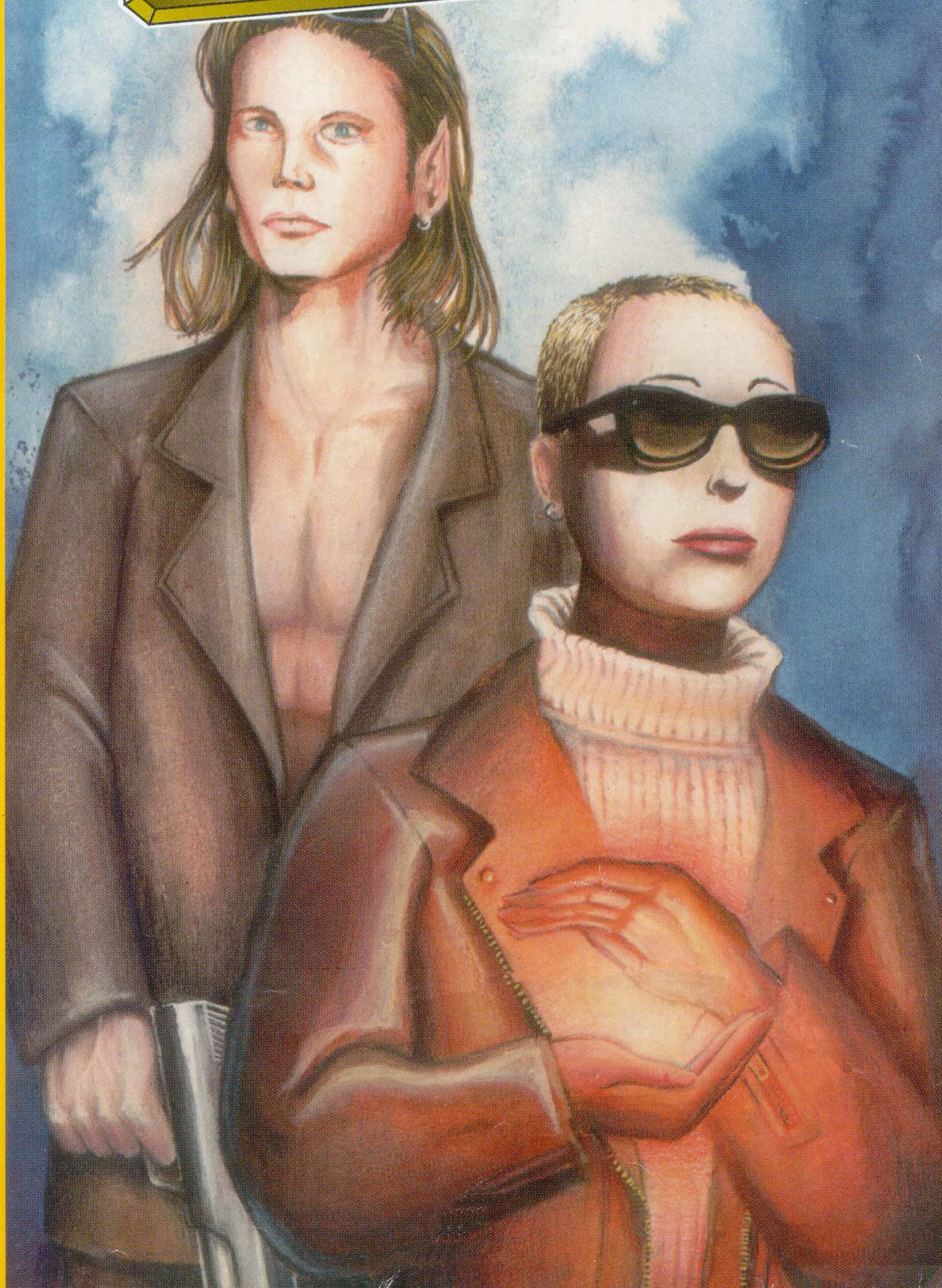
UNLIMITED

Issue #3

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ADVENTURES UNLIMITED

Issue #3
Fall 1995

MOON SHADOWS..... BY JOHN FLETCHER 4



The Aztec sun god burns brightly in the small town of San Sebastian, and an unusual woman is hiring shadowrunners for a trip south of the border. Can the team of gunslingers and mages for hire thwart the ambitions of an Aztlan priest?

THE LEGEND OF LONG KNIFE..... BY FRASER CAIN 14



An ancient Hawaiian legend tells of a sun-bright weapon with the power to convey victory upon any king who wielded it. Is there any basis in truth in this fabulous story? If not, why are the Japanese so keen on finding an artifact that should have rusted away decades ago?

>>> With conversion notes for Hero.

A GIFT FROM THE WEST..... BY JOHN HART 26



The dream is important. Were it not, it would not have been sent to all of your companions, as well as yourself. But what is that pale light in the West, and what does that strange verse mean? The search for the answers will take the characters on a strange and dangerous quest indeed.

SPIRITS OF THE FOREST..... BY ANDREW J. LUCAS & MARK FREIN 36

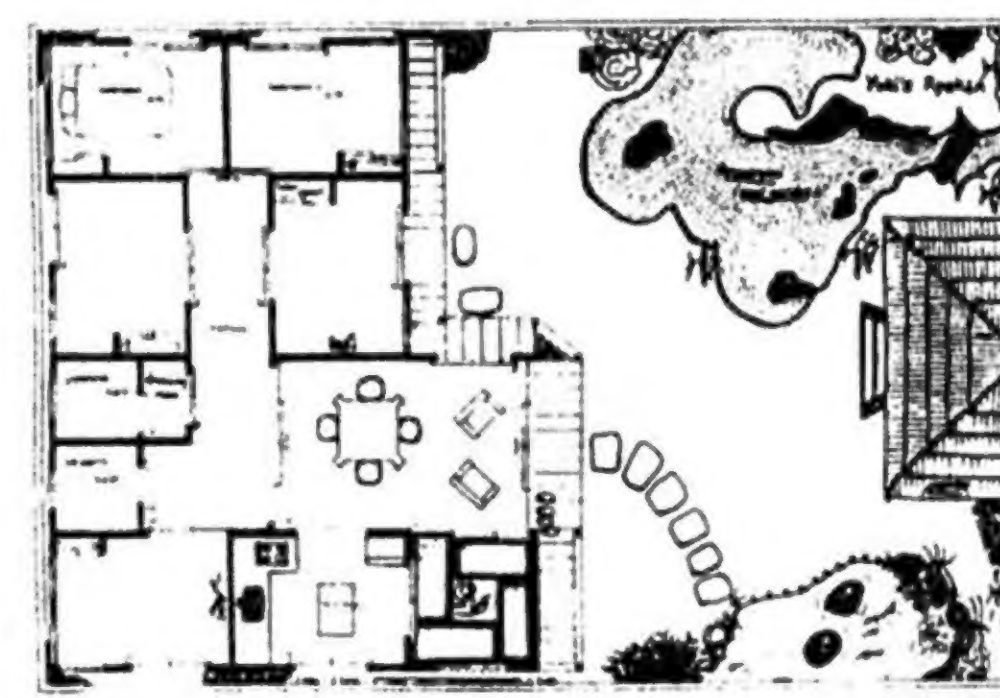


Ah Japan. Land of pretty geishas and deadly ninjas. There's trouble brewing in the woods, and the locals are blaming it on the *oni* demon spirits. But wherever there's a tournament, the evil agents of Shadoloo are sure to be lurking.

>>> With conversion notes for Champions.

OUR CENTERFOLD

Our centerfold, designed for 25mm scale figurines, is a traditional Japanese *ryokan* inn for the *Spirits of the Forest* adventure for the *Street Fighter* game.



ON OUR COVER

The *Shadowrun* illustration on our cover is by Mike Crippin. It's a mixture of inks, acrylics and pencils.



How to Hook 'EM BY LISA SMEDMAN AND MARK FREIN 50



This column is the first in our Designer's Forum series on creating your own roleplaying adventures. It offers tips on solving that age-old problem: how to design a "hook" or starting point for an adventure that your players will find it impossible to resist.

TO BELIEVE BY DARREN RIDER 56



It was an unusual assignment, even for agents used to working on files that fall into the Classification: Unknown category. A man, suffering from a disease that is making him hold before his time, who is raving about Satan and the end of the world. Is he really as insane as he seems?

>>>> With conversion notes for Call of Cthulhu.

BORDER WORLDS BY BRIAN LORANGER AND ANDREW J. LUCAS 65



Your assignment: to bravely go where no one has gone before. Take up the challenge of playing two or more opponents using these multi-player rules for the Star Trek Next Generation Customizable Card Game.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA BY PIERS BROWN 68



Passions run high in opera. But someone has gone too far, and now a man lies dead on the stage. Can the characters figure out the riddle that lies behind this ghastly crime?

>>>> With conversion notes for Castle Falkenstein.

Adventures Unlimited is a quarterly publication of Bootstrap Press Inc. All adventures presented herein are unofficial supplements to existing game systems. Permission to use the logos of these gaming systems has been granted by the companies that produce these games, but does not imply official sanction.

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Moon Shadows

BY JOHN FLETCHER

Moon Shadows is an adventure for the Shadowrun™ game that takes the runners to the strange and dangerous land of Aztlan. They are hired by an exotic young woman to defend her community from the machinations of Aztlaner priests.

This adventure is inspired by the *Aztlan Sourcebook* by Nigel D. Findley, published by FASA. The plumed serpent shaman Miguel Fuentes and the blood spirit were created using the rules on pages 174-176, while Selene/Coyolxauhqui was created using the guidelines for free spirits described in *The Grimoire, Second Edition*, p. 76.

Moon Shadows is linear and open-ended. There are also points when the gamemaster can insert encounters to add danger and color to the plot. (Suggested encounters are marked "Option.") The *Aztlan Sourcebook* includes a wealth of detail and color for the gamemaster who wants to elaborate such optional encounters or develop further adventures in Mexico of 2055.

Prologue

She'd seemed all right. A really earnest type. Rare in the shadows, but about what I'd expected from an Aztlan dissident. She called herself Selene. Aztechnology was planning something nasty for her home town, and she wanted a team of 'Runners to frag up their scheme. Hired guns like in that old 2D vid The Magnificent Seven. It sounded like trouble, but I never could say no to a face like hers.

The Sad Tale of San Sebastian del Rio

The Runners are contacted by a "Ms. Johnson" who wishes to meet them at the place of their choosing to offer them a lucrative contract. Her town, San Sebastian del Rio, has lived in relative peace for many years, taking the changes of the Awakening in stride. In the last three months, however, things have changed. The Aztlan Cultural Education Service (A.C.E.S.) has excavated and refurbished a *teocalli* (an ancient temple) near San Sebastian. Here, they have been "encouraging" the populace at gunpoint to attend rituals honoring Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec hero god of the sun, war and conquest.

Many townsfolk have been injured or killed while resisting the Aztechnology soldiers who provide security for the A.C.E.S. The most vocal dissenters have disappeared and some suspect they have become sacrifices on the altar of the rebuilt temple.

Selene wants the runners to come to San Sebastian to train her people to resist the Aztlaners. The plan she presents to the runners includes the following details:

➤ Insertion into Aztlan by airship. The runners will hide in a pressurized container onboard a cargo airship. Selene assures them her precautions will get them past Aztlan security, both technological and magical.

➤ Travel to the rebel camp in the hills above San Sebastion. There they will train the rebels in firearms and basic tactics.

➤ Plot and execute a demonstration attack against the A.C.E.S. compound. The plan is to make the "Cultural Re-education" of San Sebastion more expensive than Aztechnology can afford.

➤ The runners are to be paid for their services with 3 kg of gold. Yes, real gold, worth over 200 000 nuyen.

Selene does not, however, offer any details on how the runners are to escape Aztlan once their job is finished.

Behind the Scenes

San Sebastion is a small town in the mountains north of Tenochtitlan (Mexico City). It is populated mostly by "traditionals" – people of native heritage. The ruined *teocalli*, refurbished by A.C.E.S., was originally dedicated to a lunar deity called Coyolxauhqui. She is one of many Meso-american deities with dual natures (including dual genders) and diverse areas of responsibility. As "God of the Inner Shell," his/her nature encompasses many things female, including the night and the especially the moon.

The *teocalli* had been overgrown and forgotten for hundreds of years, but the local people kept the traditions of the moon goddess alive with their village festivals and local superstitions. Since the Awakening, a spirit has been manifested in the area, and has been given strength by the people's beliefs. It first attained sentience a dozen years ago when it became the ally spirit of an old moon shaman named Alberto Taxco. In return for its loyal service, Alberto organized rituals for its adoration, eventually releasing it to become a powerful free spirit.

Like the moon god, the spirit is secretive and has many changeable forms. In the guise of Selene, it has contacted the runners. The runners (and players) should think Selene is a human, but the gamemaster should read her character description to understand her powers. She is vulnerable to the magics of the Aztlan priests, and so she has turned to outsiders to stop the rededication of her pyramid to Huitzilopochtli, the bloody sun god of conquest. During this episode, she is in her outgoing, or waxing phase.



• Debugging

- Selene will do whatever is necessary to get the Runners on board. She promises them more wealth, magical power, secret Aztlan data – anything. While in her waxing phase, she is extremely enthused, and will not take no for an answer!

• South of the Border Home Away From Home

- The Runners see Selene again a week after their first meeting. She shows them the cargo container that will be their home for the next few days. Concealed inside are a pressurized compartment, sleeping modules from a coffin hotel, provisions, and a

recycling toilet system. The container has been carefully weighted and insulated so its passengers can not be detected by technological means (listening devices, chemical sniffers, or x-ray scanners). If the runners ask about magical detection, Selene will assure them that counter-measures are in place.

After the Runners are inside and secured, crates containing 100 AK-97 Assault rifles, 2,000 clips of ammunition, and 50 ballistic vests (4/3) are loaded. These are labeled "machine parts" to match the containers' manifest.

The container is trucked to the airport and loaded aboard an LZ-2051-C cargo airship for the flight to Tenochtitlan. Depending on where the players are based, the flight takes from

- two to five days, with several stops.

• Welcome to Tenochtitlan

- Once through customs, the container is sent to a warehouse where Selene lets the runners out. It will be the runners' job to accompany Selene and the weapons by truck to the rebel camp outside San Sebastion. The truck is a one and a half ton panel van.

- **OPTION:** If the Runners do something to attract the attention of Aztlan Customs (like wandering around Tenochtitlan Airport in astral form) they may be detected by Aztlan Border Guard shamans. Use the Aztechnology War Shaman for this encounter. If the shaman is able to report in, the container will be opened and searched. Only powerful illusion magic can prevent a major confrontation. If the runners can elude capture, Selene recontacts the survivors and guides them to San Sebastion.

- San Sebastion is about 120 km north of Tenochtitlan in the Sierra Madre. The runners can reach the area before dawn if they drive all night.

OPTION: If the players are itching for a gunfight, the gamemaster can arrange for Aztechnology security to stop the truck at a roadblock. The runners must devise a ploy to get through the roadblock without causing suspicion, or they will have to fight or outrun the security troopers. The Aztechnology troopers' pursuit vehicles are Aztech-built patrol cars equivalent to Ares Citymasters.

Behind the Scenes

During the insertion, Selene is in her maternal full moon phase. She will ride shotgun, watching over the container in astral form and using her magic pool, Concealment power, and appropriate illusion spells to get the container through Aztlan customs undetected. During this phase, she is most powerful magically and exhibits the most skill.

The runners have little to do in this episode, but the gamemaster should emphasize the danger, the daring, the sheer audacity of attempting to enter Aztlan illegally. In this situation, the appropriate thing to do is nothing; characters who display patience and discretion should be rewarded. Characters who draw attention to themselves will be detected by Aztechnology.

Secrets of the Sierra Madre Rebel Underground

On a deserted dirt road in the hills, Selene asks to be let out. She returns after several minutes with a group of townspeople. The van is unloaded and one of the rebels drives it away. The remaining rebels walk off into the darkness, carrying the crates.

Selene beckons the runners to follow, and leads them to an old mine dating from colonial times. In the tunnels and galleries of the mine, rebels have set up a sizable camp housing thirty-six people, thirty of whom are capable of being trained for battle. (The other six serve as cooks and camp followers.) The runners get the impression that these people could hold out for a long time underground. They notice that several months' worth of food and fuel have been stored, and that the tunnel provides access to an underground spring.

Selene gathers the rebels in the largest cave and introduces the runners to them. She tells her people of the runners' past good deeds. The runners will be surprised at the kind of things she knows about them (the gamemaster will have to fill in the details, based on previous adventures). They may find this font of knowledge suspicious, but the GM should not give them any more information about it immediately.

If a runner tries later to remember the incident, each will recall that it happened at

- night. If they ask again, after the events of
- Inconstant Moon, each will recall that it
- happened on a night of the full moon.

Class of 2053

- Over the next few weeks, the runners must train the
- rebels in small arms and tactics. To fulfill their
- contract, they must plan and lead the rebels in an
- attack on the Aztlan forces – specifically, the ancient
- *teocalli*.

- The rebels have various reasons for opposing
- Aztechnology, but none have any real fighting skills
- (use the Citizen of San Sebastian profile for all the
- rebels).

- The runners, in turn, should plan out the goals
- and methods by which they will train the townsfolk.
- All training must take place underground or under
- cover of the mountain slope's sparse pine forest. To
- teach a skill, a runner must have at least a rating of 3.
- Each rebel will gain a 1 rating in that skill if the
- runner can make a challenging Leadership test.

- **OPTION:** While training outdoors, the
- inexperienced rebels encounter an Aztechnology
- patrol (use the Aztechnology Trooper profile). It
- gives them their first experience in battle – and
- brings their first casualty. Jose, a much beloved old
- ork, draws the patrol away, sacrificing himself to
- allow the wounded and frightened recruits to
- withdraw to safety.

- **OPTION:** Alissa, a young romantic, falls for one
- of the swashbuckling shadowrunners and tries to
- convince him to forget the rebellion and run away
- together. If the runner fails to return the young
- woman's feelings, she may betray the group to
- Aztechnology.

- After the first week, Selene becomes more and
- more agitated. "Every day that goes by," she says,
- "more of our people fall under the domination of the
- priest of Huitzilopochtli!"

- Ten days after the runners' arrival, a young
- woman brings news of Alberto Taxco, the shaman
- Selene calls "her mentor." He has opposed Miguel
- Fuentes, the A.C.E.S. director, and is the latest of
- many *disparu* (people taken in the night).

- Worse yet, the young messenger has been used
- to ferret out the rebel hideout. Tracking her astrally
- is a blood spirit summoned by Fuentes – a being
- called the Wrath of Huitzilopochtli. Once inside the
- rebel tunnels, the Wrath of Huitzilopochtli will use
- its powers to cause fear and wreak havoc.

- The runners will encounter the spirit as it drains
- its first victim. In the darkness and confusion, they
- can hear a young girl screaming. Rounding a corner,
-

they see her pinned against the wall, bathed in a ghostly firelight. Around her hangs a thick, unnatural red cloud, and the smell of blood fills the air. The girl writhes in obvious agony and then slumps to the floor, unconscious. The firelight fades, but the cloud persists and drifts slowly toward the runners.

None of the rebels is an active shaman or mage. It is up to the runners to drive off or destroy the blood spirit. If it cannot be destroyed or banished before is satiated (drained atotal of 6 essence), it will flee back to Fuentes and reveal the location of the rebel stronghold.

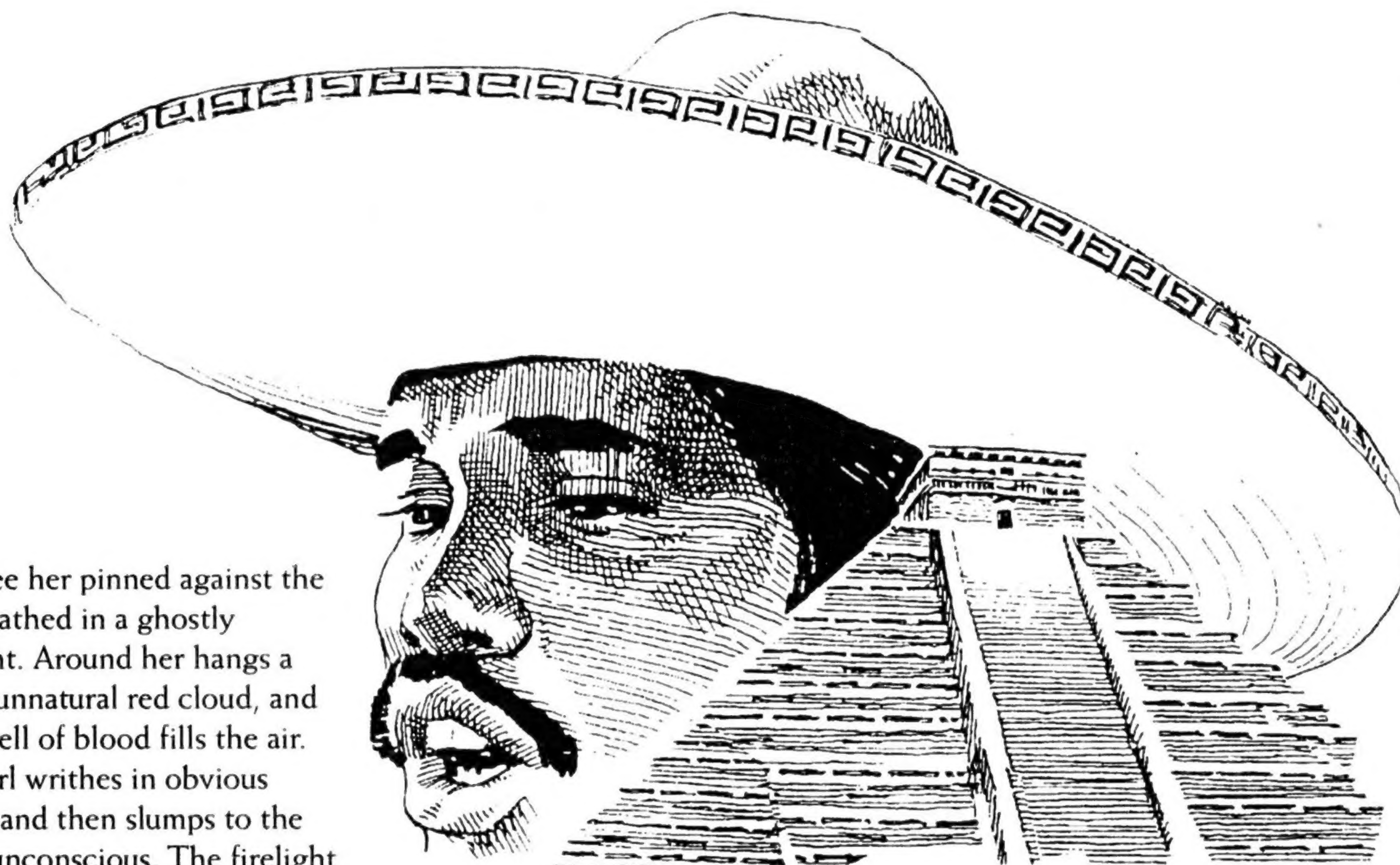
Inconstant as the Moon

After the attack of the blood spirit, the runners will discover that Selene is missing. No matter where the players search, she cannot be found. Inspecting her chamber in the tunnels yields several important clues about her identity, however – as well as an object necessary for completing the adventure.

Everything the players have every seen Selene wear or use is in her chamber: her clothes, her shamanic talismans and foci, and her handgun. Strangely, there are no toiletries or hygiene products. (She doesn't need them.) Hidden under a blanket is a stone idol about two feet tall. It is a highly stylized figure with male and female characteristics, and is embellished with snakes, flowers, and abstract patterns. In its hands it holds a long-eared creature (a stylized rabbit).

The runners may observe the statue physically and astrally, exercising several skills to examine it. Use of Sociology (7), or specialties like Anthropology or Archaeology identifies the style as pre-Aztec empire. The specific deity cannot be identified, but the sculpture has some features suggesting a later Aztec deity: Coyolxauhqui a minor goddess of the moon.

A successful physical Science (4) test confirms



the statue to be made of local stone. Observing it astrally reveals an obvious aura. A Magic Theory (5) success confirms its age and reveals it as a object of long-term veneration.

The tunnels themselves are much newer and have no discernible spiritual signature. This should suggest that the idol does not belong here and has been moved from somewhere else. It masses 20 kg.

Behind the Scenes

While the runners train the rebels, Selene's waning moon personality becomes more manifest. The runners may notice that she has lost weight. They will certainly notice the change in her personality; she has become cynical and bitter. She is less satisfied with the runners' efforts and the state of their training program for her people.

During the runners' tenth night with the rebels, the waning moon sets for the last time and Selene disappears. (Her spirit energy is very low and she cannot physically manifest.)

Debugging

It is expected that the runners will not stray too far from their duty. If they leave the camp, they leave Selene's magical protection and will be fair game for the Aztlan authorities.

If the blood spirit survives to report in, the adventure can take a different but no less entertaining direction. The runners and the rebels will have to defend their underground stronghold against Fuentes' modest squad of troops – and escape before reinforcements arrive.

Ciudad San Sebastian

The attack of the blood spirit brings home the urgency of the situation. The area around the old temple gathers more and more power with each ceremony and every sacrifice to Huitzilopochtli. The rebels must strike hard and they must strike soon to stop the growing magical power of Fuentes. Without Selene, leadership of the rebels falls to the runners.

Small Town Life

San Sebastian is like small towns everywhere. It has family run businesses, a school, a church, and a feed store for the local farmers. There are a few modern buildings made of metal and synthetic materials, but most are of wood or adobe construction.

The town site is bounded by a small river to the southwest and steep bluffs to the north. Two kilometers upriver from the town, against the northern hills, is an ancient platform temple.

The runners can move easily about the town and surrounding country if they dress like locals and have no obvious cyberware. Things may get difficult if they speak neither Spanish nor Nahuatl. In any case, the rebels can give them a complete description of the temple site and the situation in San Sebastian.

Religious Strife

Three months ago, the Aztlan Cultural Education Service arrived to survey the ancient ruins. Fuentes immediately recognized the potential spiritual power of the temple and began his restoration work. Since then, he has held increasingly elaborate ceremonies and demonstrated greater and greater magics.

Two months ago, people who had voiced opposition to Fuentes began to disappear. Neighbors speak in hushed tones of dark shapes coming by night and taking them away. It is widely believed that these captives are held in the sanctuary at the top of the pyramid.

Visiting the Ruins

The locals can relate the following about the temple: The *teocalli* is located atop a three-step pyramid in the ruins of an ancient settlement. Each level is about three meters high and a wide stair leads up the south face to the temple.

Aztechnology has closed off the site with a three-meter-high, chain-link fence. Three prefab buildings have been set up to the west of the pyramid. Fuentes lives and works in the northernmost hut, while the Aztechnology troops are housed in the center building. The third building, in the southwest corner of the compound, is the guard room.

Townpeople are only allowed in the temple grounds during ceremonies. The next ceremony is the day after tomorrow.

- The players may use the map of the temple and Aztechnology encampment to plan their characters' actions. Encourage them to use the terrain and situation to come up with a workable plan to attack the temple and defeat Fuentes' ambitions.

Behind the Scenes

- There are several things about the temple site that the runners will have to discover for themselves – either before or during the assault. There are 22 Aztechnology troopers on site: 20 regular soldiers, a sergeant, and a war shaman. The fence is equipped with sensors. If the wires are cut or a ladder is leaned against the fence, it will trigger an alarm in the guard room. Aztechnology troopers and Fuentes' watcher spirits patrol the perimeter at regular intervals.

- The area around the *teocalli* has high levels of undirected magical force, or spiritual static. Any mage or shaman not aligned with the neo-Aztec beliefs and totems suffers a -1 to all spell tests when within 1 km, and a -2 within 100 meters. Inside the sanctuary, even non-magical characters can feel the malign spiritual forces; all magic-related tests there are at a -3.

- Lastly (as the locals suspect) Fuentes is practicing blood magic rituals of human sacrifice. Taxco will be the first public sacrifice, at the noon ceremony the day after tomorrow.

Debugging

- If the above information and the map do not inspire any plans, the rebels themselves may offer some suggestions. The site can be reached by: sneaking up to the fence through the forest; crawling through the ruins; or entering disguised as townspeople at the time of next ceremony. Attacking at night is also a possibility. An attack on the day of the ceremony, however, would be witnessed by more people and therefore be a more effective demonstration of the people's will to resist the worship of Huitzilopochtli.

- The runners may decide that Fuentes represents such a danger that they should inform the authorities. His superiors in the Aztlan government and Aztechnology, however, are well aware of his plans. They want to see what he can accomplish in the relatively small town of San Sebastian so they can apply it on a larger scale. Aztechnology also controls all public transportation and the media, so they have few worries about Fuentes actions being publicized. (Selene only escaped to contact the shadowrunners because she is not human!)

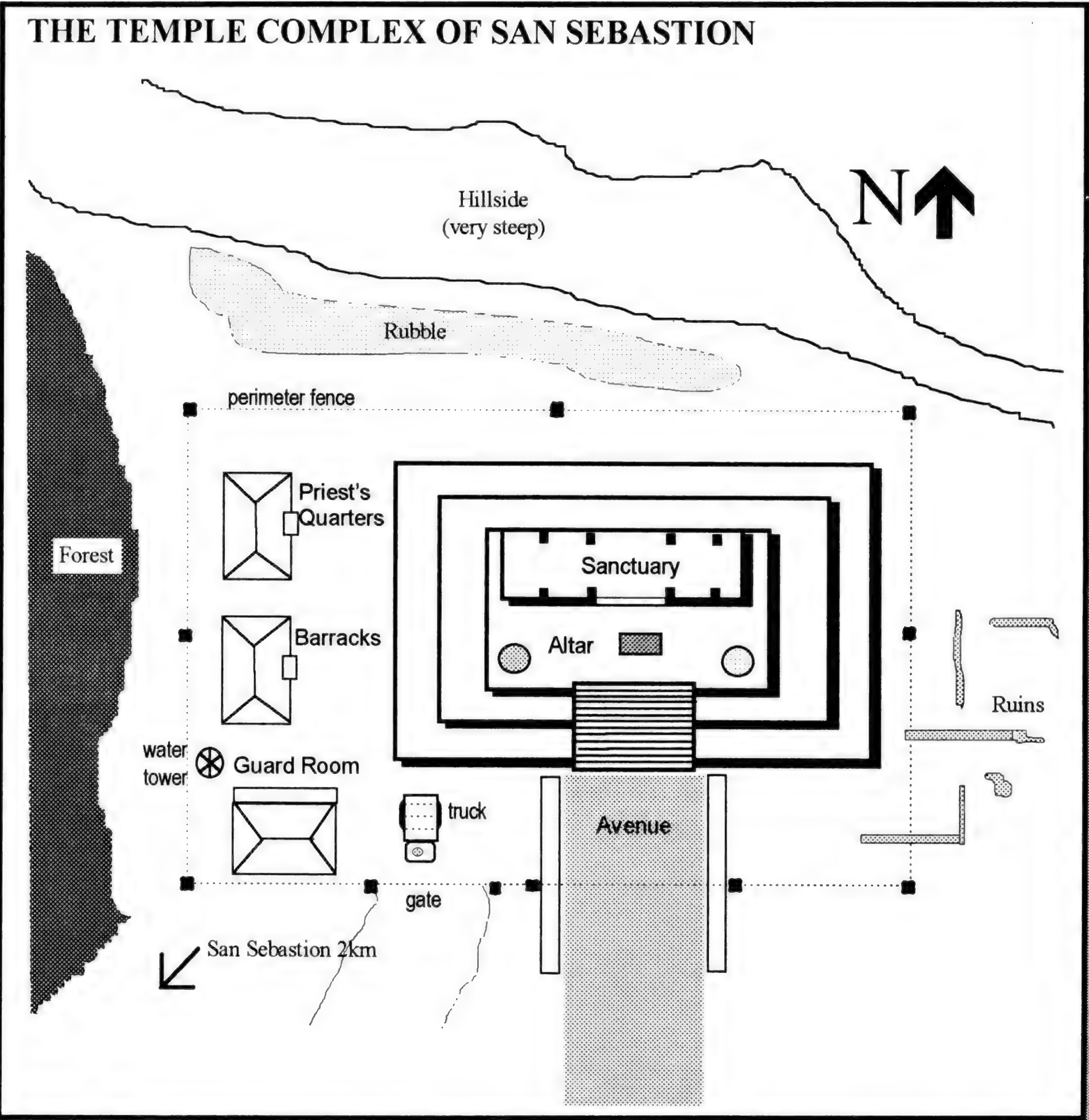
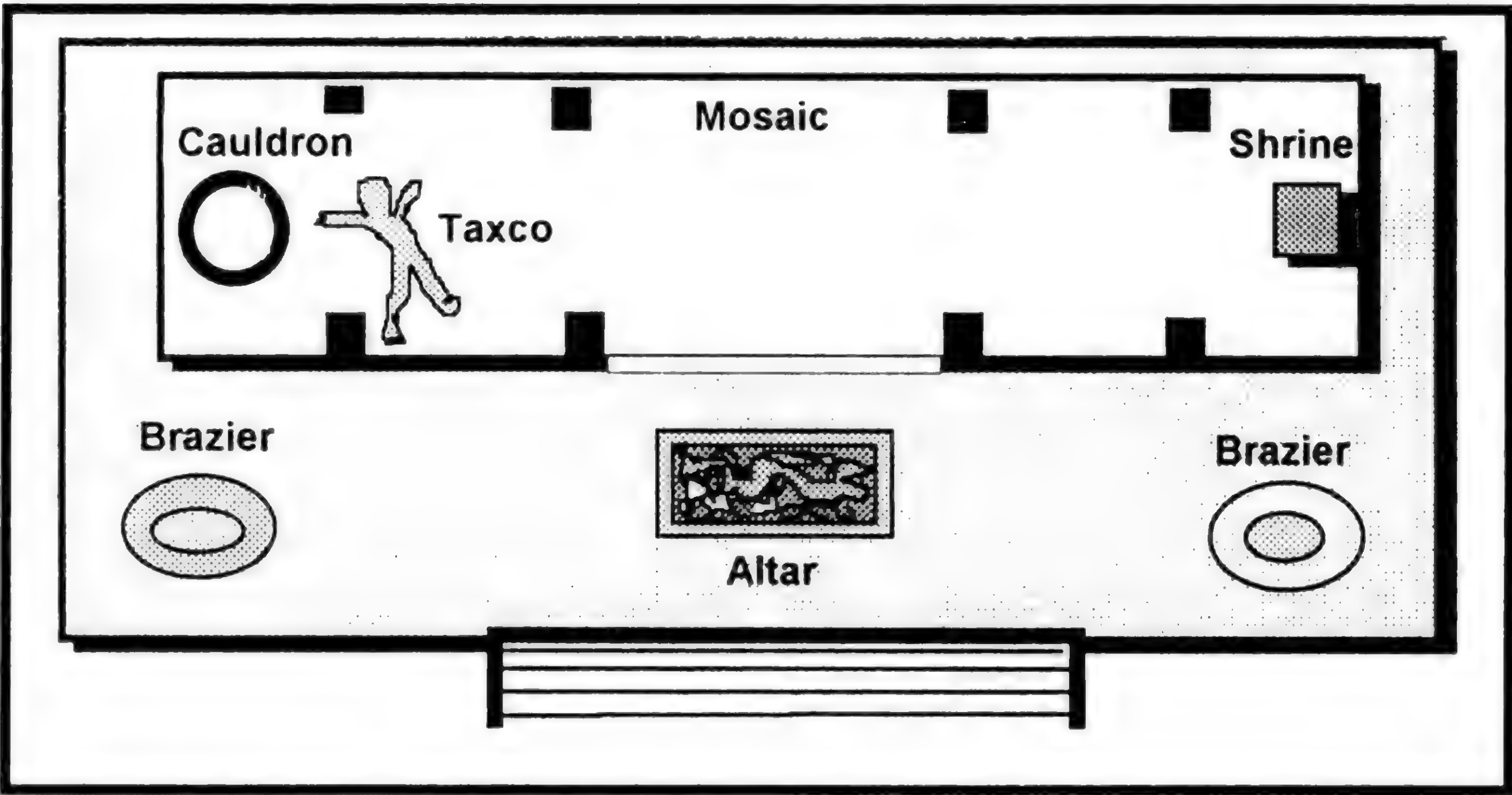
- It is possible the runners and rebels could receive some assistance from the Yucatan rebels (detailed in the *Aztlan Sourcebook*). What form this takes is up to the gamemaster.

Showdown

The Aztlaners' locations and reactions depend on when and how the rebels attack:

Night Attack

The Aztlaners will be deployed as follows: four troopers walking the perimeter; two at the gate; four in the guard house. The others, including the sergeant and the shaman, are asleep in barracks. Unless the troops in the



guardhouse are immediately taken out, they will turn on all lights. The guards in the barrack will be up and in action in 3d6 turns – but they won't have had a chance to armor up.

Fuentes will be awake in his hut, or will be awakened by one of his watcher spirits. When he can, Fuentes will try to reach the sanctuary of the *teocalli*. He attempts to get there stealthily, but will use magic and firepower as necessary. If possible, the war shaman will rendezvous with Fuentes at the *teocalli*.



Daylight Strike

If the runners organize an attack by day, the morning of the ceremony finds 49 villagers herded up to the temple. The fence has been rolled back in the area called the avenue. The villagers are forced to sit and watch the ceremonies by ten guards, five atop each low wall on either side of the avenue. The sergeant and two more guards stand on the steps of the pyramid, while the shaman assists Fuentes at the altar on the top level. Another four guards patrol the fence. (The remaining guards are off duty, and are resting in the barracks. They can respond to any attack in 3d6 turns – but once again, won't have time to armor up.)

The runners can choose to strike at any time. Until they intervene, the ceremony proceeds as follows:

The shaman and Fuentes light the large braziers, sending smoke and fire high into the sky. Fuentes

- then gives a fiery address evoking Huitzilopochtli and Quetzalcotl and extolling the virtues of the Aztec revival (25 minutes). He casts Entertainment and treats the crowd to a magical display of the heroic deeds of Huitzilopochtli (23 minutes). He
- then has the shaman bring out the limp form of an old man Alberto Taxco.

- If the runners do not intervene, he sacrifices Taxco and casts the Control Emotions spell, causing admiration and devotion amongst the townsfolk. He
- hopes to siphon off this goodwill as karma and

habituate the townsfolk to sacrifice and bloodshed. (The runners should intervene long before this happens.)

The townspeople are in great danger if the runners' first strike is not clean and decisive. If the guards are not overpowered in the first three turns, Fuentes orders them to fire on the unarmed civilians. If, however, the runners can take down some of the guards, the townsfolk will

- have a chance to flee or join the fight. The war shaman will cast his Barrier and Fuentes will
- withdraw inside the sanctuary if he feels he is in danger.

The Sanctuary of the Teocalli

- Whether the attack comes by day or night, Fuentes will eventually withdraw to the sanctuary.

- Immediately inside is a tile mosaic of the same being depicted on the idol found in Selene's chamber. It has been recently defaced. To the east is a similar mosaic and a short pedestal. If the idol is placed on the pedestal, Selene can again enter the temple grounds. She manifests as soon as the moon rises (any time the gamemaster sees fit).

- Fuentes will withdraw to the west, where Alberto Taxco lies sprawled on the ground (assuming he is still alive). Beyond is a cauldron of dark fluid (blood). Fuentes will shelter behind the shaman's Barrier, and

attempts to summon a greater form blood spirit.

If allowed to kill Taxco as a sacrifice, Fuentes resists the Drain, and a Force 8 blood spirit appears. It will follow the priest's orders, pursuing the runners relentlessly unless they can banish it or defeat Fuentes.

The runners should be motivated to stop this, which they can do by rescuing or shielding Taxco. Killing him first would also work, but wouldn't make them any friends in San Sebastian.

If the runners stop the sacrifice, Fuentes will still attempt the summoning. The gamemaster should allow him to succeed in the summoning but fail to resist the Drain. The spirit runs amok, causing fear and panic as it attacks indiscriminately and drains essence.

When things begin to look grim for the runners, Selene can reappear. The gamemaster should use her only to help tip the balance, and should leave the decisive action to the player characters. She will be, of course, in her energetic waxing moon phase. She cannot enter the magical zone of the *teocalli* until her idol has been replaced in its shrine at the east end of the sanctuary.

Debugging

If the runners cannot prevent the release of the blood spirit or the corruption of the townsfolk, their adventures in Aztlan have just begun. Survival and escape should be very challenging.

Epilogue

She was as good as her word. At the bottom of that well we found gold nuggets, jewelry, and this little figure of a jaguar. Enough gold to set us up for a while. I don't know how she knew about it. The stuff musta' been there 500 years. Yeah, there was some other stuff, too. I told Nudnick not to touch it, but he don't listen to me.

It ended kinda like The Magnificent Seven too. We lost some friends, but I think we did some good. Maybe. It's too soon to tell.

Selene does indeed reward any surviving runners with the gold she promised. She tells them how to find a cache of gold and pre-Columbian documents that were hidden away during the conquest of Mexico. She describes the location and contents in detail, and warns the characters to take only the gold trinkets – not the documents or other objects.

Searching in the hills west of San Sebastian, the runners will find things exactly as Selene described. At the bottom of a dry well they find over 200 000 nuyen of gold jewelry and some priceless scrolls written in the ancient glyphs. The scrolls have a magical aura that is unfamiliar to the runners. Selene wants the scrolls kept secret for now and will attempt

- to get them back if the runners take them. As a free spirit, she can go anywhere and will eventually track them down.

- Whether the runners have more adventures in Aztlan, or sneak quietly back across the border is up to the players and the gamemaster.

Karma Rewards

- ➤ Every character gets 1 karma for survival.
- ➤ Each runner who had any success teaching the rebels receives 1 karma.
- ➤ Contributing to the defeat of the Wrath of Huitzilopochtli is worth 1 karma.
- ➤ Actively planning and fighting in the assault on the temple is worth 2 karma.
- ➤ Stopping Fuentes from releasing the greater form blood spirit or corrupting the people is worth 2 karma.
- ➤ Stealing objects from Selene's cache does not cost karma, but may have consequences.

Cast of Characters

Selene/Coyolxauhqui (Free Spirit Force 6)

- Selene is very secretive and presents herself as a human lunar shaman. Everyone in San Sebastian believes they know her well, but no one can tell the runners anything about her. She acts as if she has known the townsfolk all her life (she has) and they all assume she is someone else's daughter, sister, cousin, niece, etc.

- Selene's nature should be ambiguous to the runners. For game purposes, she has the abilities of a free spirit. The players, however, should not be sure if she is really a manifestation of the ancient diety Coyolxauhqui, or just a powerful spirit.

Force: 6

- **Spirit Energy:** Varies with phase. (Waxing moon +1, Full moon +3, Waning moon -2, New moon -4.)

- **Note:** Free spirits add Spirit Energy to Force to determine attributes.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
6*	6*	6*	8	5	8	6*	10
* = +Spirit							

- **Skills:** Conjuring 5; Leadership (Religious/Political) 4; Stealth 8; Sorcery 8; Unarmed Combat 4.

- **Spells:** Treat Selene as a Lunar Druid (*Grimoire* p. 28). She can attempt any spell using the following modifiers: +2 for Manipulation and Illusion spells; +1 for Detection spells; +4 to conjure water spirits; +1 for Combat spells.

- **Powers:** Aura Masking; Concealment; Hidden Life, hidden in the statue. Human Form, including Immunity to Normal Weapons; Personal

Domain, the temple grounds, but only when statue is in place.

Weaknesses: Lunar Influence. Selene's spirit energy varies with the phase of the moon. The modifiers are applied to her Force for determining current attributes. It is also used as a modifier to all skills ratings. During the new moon, Selene loses her Human Form power and cannot manifest physically. She cannot enter the temple grounds unless her idol is replaced in its shrine.

Appearance: In human form, Selene is a handsome Nahuatl woman. Her apparent age and condition change weekly, in tune with the phases of the moon. During the waxing moon, she is youthful, fit and energetic, displaying boundless enthusiasm. At the peak of her power (during the full moon) she seems heavier and more matronly. In the period of the waning moon she is bitter and cynical, becoming visibly thinner. She cannot manifest at all during the dark of new moon.

Gear: Throwing Knives (3), Beretta 101T, shamanic paraphernalia, shoulder bag, rustic clothes. She wears no armor but has Immunity to Normal Weapons equal to her current Essence.

Miguel Fuentes, Priest of Huitzilopochtli (Solar Shaman)

Fuentes is an average looking man with great personal charisma. Using his powers of persuasion and Control Emotion magics, he has converted many to the Neo-Aztec faith. Fuentes is a solar shaman (treat him like a sun druid, *Grimoire* page 29) and an initiate of the Path of Blood. Refer to the *Aztlan Sourcebook* for the rules for blood magic. If this sourcebook is not available, play Fuentes as a Toxic shaman.

If one priest is not enough challenge for the Runners, add one or more secondary priests with half the skill ratings of Fuentes.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	4	3	8	6	5	6	8	4

Armor: 5/3

Initiative: 4+1d6

Skills: Armed Combat 2; Conjuring 6; Car 1; Etiquette (Aztlan) 3; Firearms 2; Interrogation 4; Leadership (religious/political) 4; Magic Theory (Blood Magic) 4; Parazoology 1; Sorcery 8.

CyberWare: None

Gear: Monoknife, armored jacket (5/3), priestly costume, ceremonial paraphernalia, notebook computer. Remington roomsweeper. Specific Spirit focus (blood spirit)(3), expendable fetishes

- (8) weapon focus, *Macuitl*, ceremonial obsidian-edged sword (Str/2)M.
- Spells: Manaball 6, Power Bolt 5, Analyze Truth 4, Control Emotion 4, Barrier 6, Flame Bomb 6, Mana Barrier 5, Entertainment 5.

Alberto Taxco

- Alberto is very old and infirm. His long life was partly due to Spell Locked Increased Body and Willpower, which Fuentes has removed. He remains unconscious throughout the action of the finale. If is rescued, he will miraculously recover through the interevntion of Selene.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
1	2	1	4	6	2	2	1

Aztechnology Security Troopers/Sergeant

- Use these stats for all encounters with armed Aztechnology personnel. Add various weapons and cyberwear as necessary.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
5	4	4	3	4	3	6	4

Armor: 8/6

Initiative: 5+2d6

Skills: Firearms 6; Stealth 2; Unarmed Combat 3.

Sergeant: Leadership 4

CyberWare: Wired flexes 1, Smartlink 1.

Gear: Heavy armor, helmet with smart goggles and commlink, combat knife (Str+1)M, Browning Max-Power heavy pistol, AK-98 assault rifle (with under-barrel grenade launcher, recoil reduction 2, smartgun link), 2 extra magazines.

Aztechnology War Shaman (Plumed Serpent)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	4	3	2	5	5	6	6	4

Armor: 5/3

Note: As a Plumed Serpent Shaman, the war shaman receives a +2 to Detection spells, and a 2 to all spells cast outside Aztlan territory.

Initiative: 4+1d6

Skills: Conjuring 3; Firearms 2; Sorcery 6; Stealth 4; Unarmed Combat 4.

CyberWare: none.

Gear: Armored jacket, combat knife (Str+1)M, Browning Max-Power heavy pistol, AK-97 assault rifle with 2 extra magazines, shamanic paraphernalia, Spell Lock (Armor/4), Spell Lock (Personal Combat Sense/2).

Spells: Armor 3; Barrier 4, Clairaudience 3; Detect Enemies 2; Fireball 3; Heal 2; Personal Combat Senses 3.

Citizen of San Sebastian

(Use for all rebels and non-combattants)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
4	3	3	3	2	2	6	2

Armor: 0 (4/3)

Initiative: 2+1d6

Skills: Trade or Professional Skill 14; Unarmed Combat 1; Etiquette (Street) 1; Negotiate 1.

CyberWare: Little or none. One in 50 has datajack.

Gear: Rustic clothing, tools of trade, AK-97 assault rifle for rebels.

CONJURED SPIRITS

Fuentes will have at least one watcher spirit astrally patrolling the temple site at all times. It is instructed to inform him of any astral intruders. Forewarned he will summon a temple spirit (treat as a hearth spirit) to guard the temple and challenge any astral intruders.

Blood Spirits

Wrath of Huitzilopochtli

(Blood Spirit Force 6)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
7	24	6	6	6	6	6	7

Greater Blood Spirit (Force 8)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
9	30	6	8	8	8	8	9

Powers: Alienation; Attack; Essence Drain; Fear; Guard.

Weaknesses: Essence Loss (1 point daily).

Appearance: The Wrath of Huitzilopochtli appears as a cloud of red mist with the distinct smell of blood. Victims feel overwhelmingly hot. If in darkness, others see the victim illuminated by a ghostly fire light with no visible source. The attack of a Wrath of Huitzilopochtli drains a single point of essence and several pints of blood. Its victims inevitably collapse from blood loss. It then moves to terrorize a new victim and drain the essence generated by the victim's fear.

If the runners allow the Greater blood spirit to be summoned, it is larger, even more dangerous, and can cross into the domains of other spirits.

Blood spirits are Spirits of Man, but have no domain as such. They can manifest anywhere within Force x 100m of a sentient being.



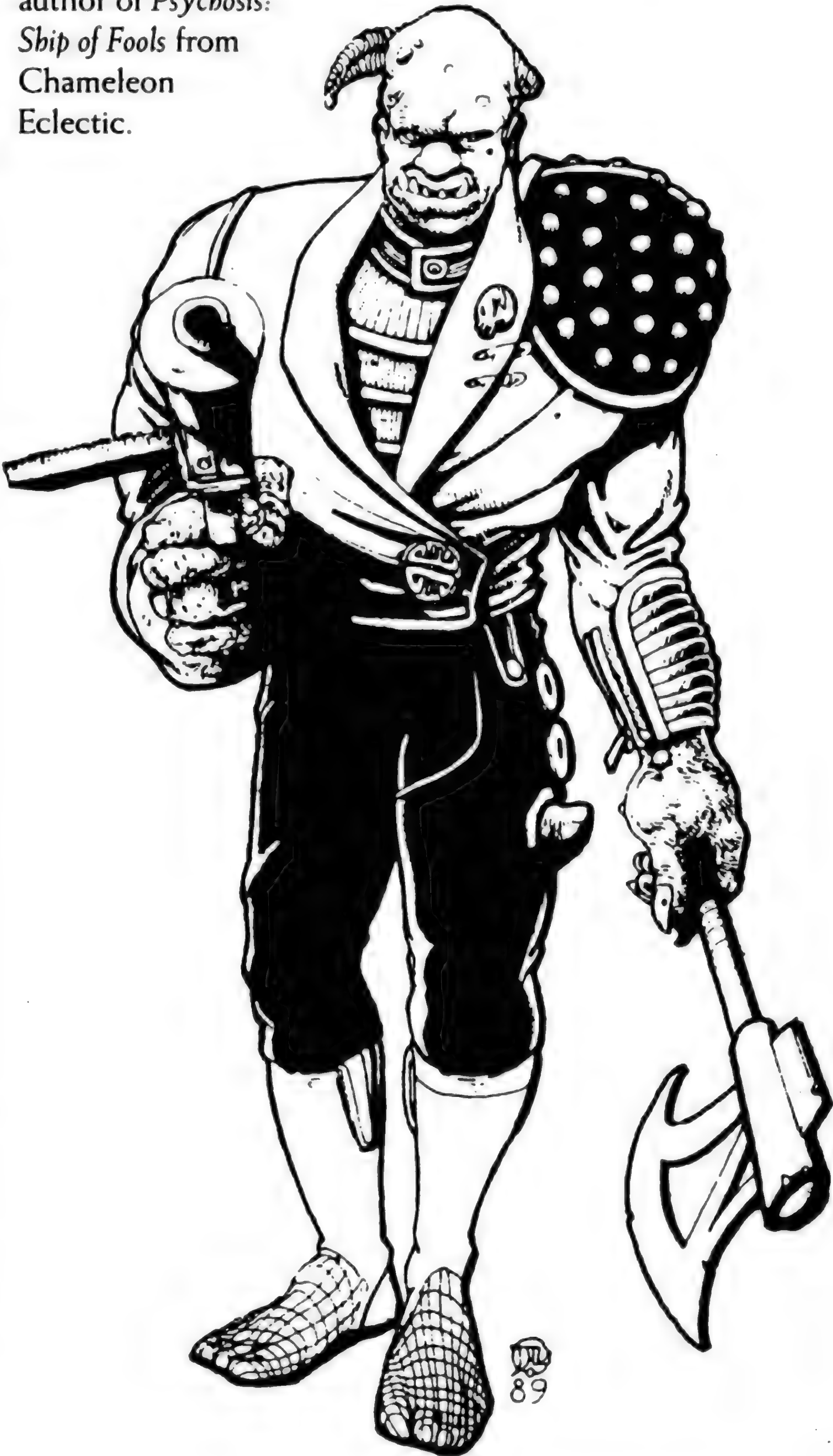
Our thanks to the following playtesters for their enthusiastic input: Leonard Babiuk, Everett Downing;

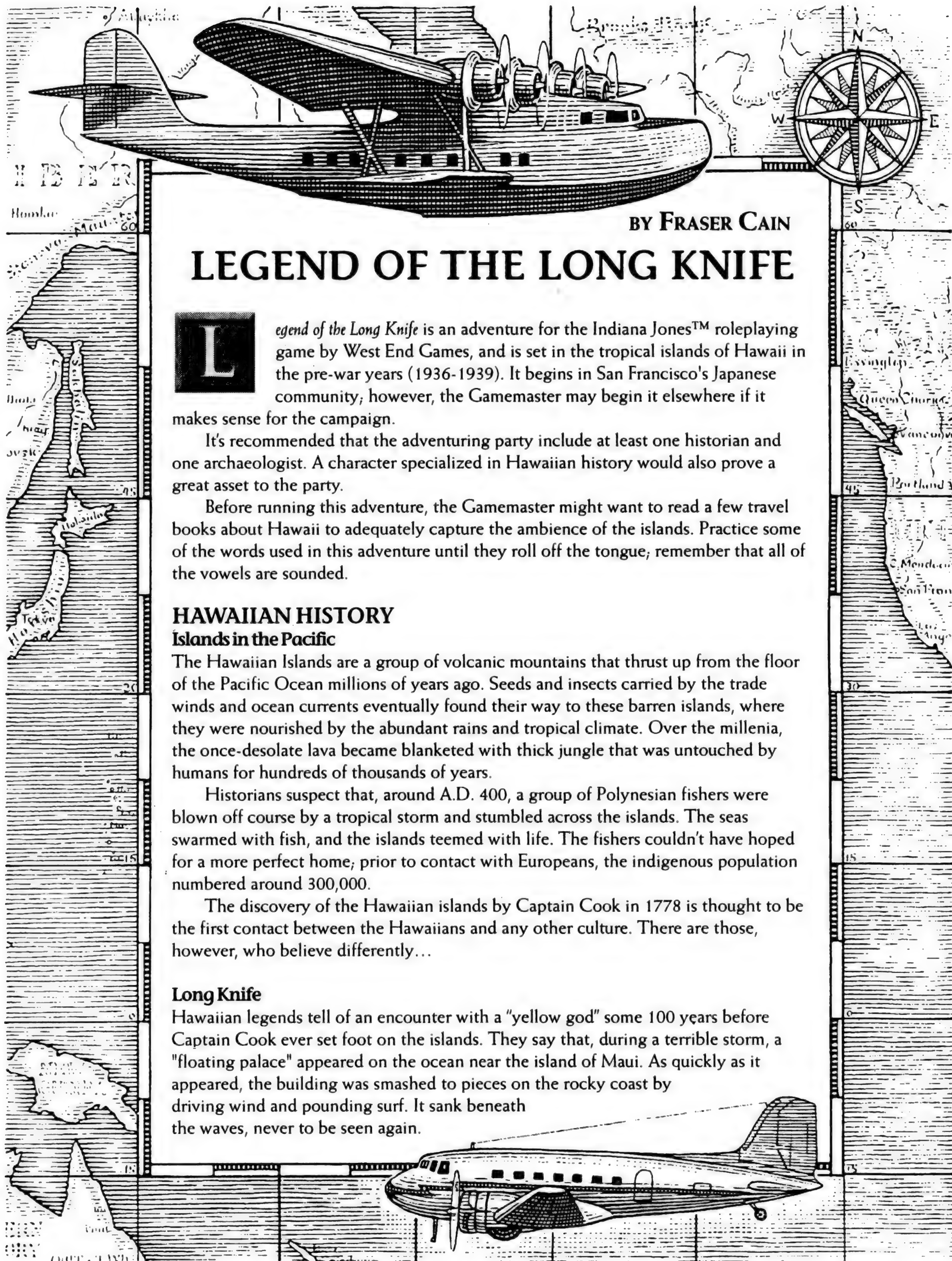
- Wyatt Hall; Damien Hutchinson; Greg Jones; Jeff Jones; Doug Lee; James McPherson; Joseph Nardi; Rich Osterhout; Joseph Pettit; Scott Preston; Bryan Prince; Erin Prince; Gordy Pueschner; Kruxen Puig; Yvie Raij; Kevin Runde; Mike Schlog; Willard Schultz; David Searfoss; Brian Soldate; Sprite; Marc Talley; Cory Thomas; Richard G Tomasso; William Valera; Vasudeva; Phil Ward; and Jakko Westerbeke.
- Special thanks to Peter Bailey for his input.



JOHN
FLETCHER

John is a longtime employee of Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems of New Brunswick, New Jersey. He introduced Dungeons & Dragons to his coworkers at Yoyodyne in 1979 and has been gaming ever since. TORG is the current favorite at Yoyodyne, though many find the premise of interdimensional invasion far fetched. John is the author of *Psychosis*: *Ship of Fools* from Chameleon Eclectic.





BY FRASER CAIN

LEGEND OF THE LONG KNIFE

Legend of the Long Knife is an adventure for the Indiana Jones™ roleplaying game by West End Games, and is set in the tropical islands of Hawaii in the pre-war years (1936-1939). It begins in San Francisco's Japanese community; however, the Gamemaster may begin it elsewhere if it makes sense for the campaign.

It's recommended that the adventuring party include at least one historian and one archaeologist. A character specialized in Hawaiian history would also prove a great asset to the party.

Before running this adventure, the Gamemaster might want to read a few travel books about Hawaii to adequately capture the ambience of the islands. Practice some of the words used in this adventure until they roll off the tongue; remember that all of the vowels are sounded.

HAWAIIAN HISTORY

Islands in the Pacific

The Hawaiian Islands are a group of volcanic mountains that thrust up from the floor of the Pacific Ocean millions of years ago. Seeds and insects carried by the trade winds and ocean currents eventually found their way to these barren islands, where they were nourished by the abundant rains and tropical climate. Over the millenia, the once-desolate lava became blanketed with thick jungle that was untouched by humans for hundreds of thousands of years.

Historians suspect that, around A.D. 400, a group of Polynesian fishers were blown off course by a tropical storm and stumbled across the islands. The seas swarmed with fish, and the islands teemed with life. The fishers couldn't have hoped for a more perfect home; prior to contact with Europeans, the indigenous population numbered around 300,000.

The discovery of the Hawaiian islands by Captain Cook in 1778 is thought to be the first contact between the Hawaiians and any other culture. There are those, however, who believe differently...

Long Knife

Hawaiian legends tell of an encounter with a "yellow god" some 100 years before Captain Cook ever set foot on the islands. They say that, during a terrible storm, a "floating palace" appeared on the ocean near the island of Maui. As quickly as it appeared, the building was smashed to pieces on the rocky coast by driving wind and pounding surf. It sank beneath the waves, never to be seen again.

When the Hawaiians rushed to the spot where the building went under, they found a "yellow god" floating in the water, clutching a snapped timber. They brought the near-drowned god to their huts and nursed him back to health. Like the Hawaiian people, the god had dark skin and straight, black hair. Unlike the stocky Hawaiians, however, he was slender and his eyes were oddly shaped. He wore a yellow robe of a slippery material.

Perhaps the most incredible find – the one that proved the visitor's divinity to the superstitious Hawaiians – was the

strange artifact he carried at his side. The Hawaiians were no strangers to war; battles between island nations were brutally fought with bone and wood daggers. But this artifact (which the Hawaiians named Long Knife) was like no weapon they had seen before. It

was as long as a man's leg, and was made from a stone so hard and shiny that it defiantly threw back the rays of the sun. It was believed that the warrior who wielded Long Knife in battle would never be defeated.

It is not known what happened to the "yellow god" but it is believed that he was killed by one of the Hawaiian *alii* (chiefs) over a difference of opinion. He participated in many battles on the island of Maui, however, and lived up to his reputation as a warrior god.

The Conquest of Kamehameha I

When Captain Cook discovered the Hawaiian Islands in 1778, he made an extended anchorage in Kealahou Bay, on the western shore of the island of Hawaii. His ships, the *Discovery* and the *Resolution*, were met by 10,000 Hawaiians in more than 2,500 canoes.

They mistook Cook for their god Lono. He was greeted by a gigantic chief who welcomed him to the island of Hawaii and ensured his every wish was granted. This chief was Kamehameha, and the two men became fast friends.

Kamehameha was fascinated by Cook's technology, and traded all he could in exchange for the Europeans' iron daggers and muskets. Negotiations became strained, however, when a group of Hawaiians stole one of the *Resolution's* cutters in the dark of night. The enraged Cook ordered his men to take the remaining cutters to the shore and punish the Hawaiians. In the confusion, Cook and

- his men opened fire on the Hawaiians with cannons and muskets. In a state of fury, the previously gentle people stormed the cutters, and slew Cook with rock and dagger.

- With the new technology that he gained from Captain Cook, Chief Kamehameha gathered a group of 16,000 warriors and crossed the water to the island of Maui. The *alii* of Maui put up a tremendous defense, and it was there Kamehameha discovered the terrible Long Knife.

- When Kamehameha finally conquered Maui, Long Knife was firmly in his grip, and history tells that he was unstoppable.

He crushed the island of Oahu next, and then the smaller islands of Lanai and Molokai. With only the island of Kauai remaining, Kamehameha's dream of conquering the islands was close at hand.

The *alii* of Kauai, fearing their island

- would also fall to the terrible onslaught, surrendered to the mighty chief and were allowed to continue to rule their island. By 1810, all of the Hawaiian Islands had been united under the benevolent rule of King Kamehameha.

The Death of Kamehameha

- In the year 1819, King Kamehameha died of old age and was buried in the traditional manner. In Kona, near Kealahou Bay, there is a sheer cliff riddled with lava tubes. A *kapu* breaker (violation of tribal law) was lowered down the side of the cliff by rope, and choose a cave in which to deposit the dead chief and his possessions. Once the chief was placed inside, the rope was cut, and the *kapu* breaker plunged 200 feet into shark-infested Kealahou Bay.

- Traditionally, *kapu* breakers were given one chance at survival before being condemned to this fate. Across Kealahou Bay is a sacred place known as Pu'uhoonua O Honaunau, or "The Place of Refuge." *Kapu* breakers would be redeemed of their crimes if they could make their way to this holy spot on the rocky coast. To make the three-mile journey by land, the criminal would have to fight past thousands of Hawaiian warriors. By sea, however, one had only to cross Kealahou Bay – and deal with the sharks. Needless to say, few survived.

- The final resting place of King Kamehameha is unknown to this day, but it is said that the mystic weapon Long Knife was buried with him.

Long Knife was like no weapon they had seen before. It was as long as a man's leg, and was made from a stone so hard and shiny that it defiantly threw back the rays of the sun.

The Japanese

In 1868, a group of Japanese laborers were brought to Honolulu to farm sugar. Although the wages were pitiful and the conditions harsh, thousands of Japanese came to the islands, hoping to save enough money to retire wealthy in Japan.

By the mid-1890s, the Japanese constituted the largest immigrant population on the islands. As did America, Japan realized the economic and military value of Hawaii, and made plans to conquer the islands. From as early as 1924, Japanese military personnel developed plans to invade Hawaii. They did not act, however, until December 7th, 1941, when Admiral Chuichi Nagumo ordered his carriers to launch a devastating surprise attack on the American fleet stationed in Pearl Harbor – an act that would bring the Americans into World War II.

It is said, however, that *dobo* (Japanese compatriots) living on the Hawaiian islands had their own plans for these "Jewels of the Pacific." As early as 1935 they prepared to conquer the islands from within.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

As discussed in Hawaiian History section, the Japanese Imperial Army has long set its sights on the Hawaiian Islands. Poised nearly halfway between Japan and America, they would make a perfect point from which to launch an attack against the mighty United States. Although Japan developed several invasion plans, it also planned to rely on the *dobo* living in Hawaii to lend support.

Tetsuo Fuchi (see the Cast of Characters section) is the editor and publisher of a Japanese newspaper, based in Honolulu, called *Hawaii Jiji*. As with its two sister publications *Jitsugyo no Hawaii* and *Hawaii Hochi*, this periodical provides news to Japanese living in Hawaii. The majority of these individuals are fence-sitters who support neither Japan nor America. Some, however (including Tetsuo Fuchi) believe that Hawaii should be under Japanese rule.

Although *Hawaii Jiji* provides news in both English and Japanese, it is clear where the newspaper's sympathies lie. Where the English section of the paper discusses the "Japanese Army" and "Japanese planes," the Japanese section speaks of "our army" and "our angry eagles." Thanks in part to Fuchi's editorializing, support for Imperial Japan is growing.

While reading a book on ancient Hawaiian stories, Fuchi came across the legend of Long Knife. It seemed obvious to him that the "yellow god" was merely a Japanese fisherman who drifted off course and became shipwrecked on Maui. The "floating palace" was his fishing boat, and Long Knife could be nothing more than a simple sword.

- If true, this would prove that the Japanese had discovered Hawaii at least a hundred years before Captain Cook. It would lend support to their claim of ownership of the islands. As the Japanese form almost forty per cent of Hawaii's population at this time, a revolution (supplied with weapons by the Imperial Army), could "rescue" them from American occupation.

- This insight, however, has left Fuchi with a dilemma. The last known location of Long Knife was in the grip of King Kamehameha as he conquered the islands. Presumably, the sword was buried with him. The location of the king's burial was a closely guarded secret – and today is perhaps completely unknown.

- To find Long Knife, Fuchi needs a group of individuals who are knowledgeable in archaeology and history, yet naive to the political situation in Hawaii. The solution, he knows, is waiting for him in mainland America. He need only make a few phone calls to set the wheels in motion.

SCENE 1: A MEETING IN LITTLE TOKYO

The Situation

- To put his plan into action, Tetsuo contacts Kanji Yonai, a *dobo* living in San Francisco, and requests that he find a group of archeologists willing to recover Long Knife from its hidden location. After some research, Yonai learns of the characters' reputation for such missions, and sets up a meeting. How Yonai contacts the characters depends on the nature of the campaign. Perhaps he sends an invitation to the leader of the group, or perhaps he visits one of the characters at their office and presents his offer.

- Once Yonai has the characters gathered together, he imparts the legend of the "yellow god" and how he arrived in his "floating palace" carrying a mystic "long knife." He says that he believes this was actually a Japanese fisherman, and that finding Long Knife could prove Japanese discovery of the Hawaiian Islands more than 100 years before Captain Cook. This is an important archeological find in itself – as anyone with a background in the science will agree.

- Although Yonai has a basic knowledge of the history of Long Knife, he is unable to answer more detailed questions. He explains that his colleague in Honolulu – Tetsuo Fuchi, editor of *Hawaii Jiji* – possesses more detailed information and is eager to speak with the characters. He offers the party \$500 to travel to Honolulu and meet with Mr. Fuchi. Furthermore, Yonai requests the party choose some method of transport to Hawaii, and he will reimburse them for the full cost of the ticket.

The Action

If the players refuse to accept the job... pout until they do. If that doesn't work, close your *Master Book* and thank them for their time.

If they accept the mission, read on.

Adventurers are a suspicious bunch, and there's little question they'll dig into Yonai's past. It'll be tough work, because Yonai was specifically chosen for this mission due to his innocuous background. Although the Japanese man is a *dobo*, he has been very careful to hide his true intentions while in America. If one of the characters is able to push his or her contacts far enough, she may learn that Yonai is a Japanese history teacher at UC Berkley, and is a member of several Japanese social groups, all of which are harmless enough.

There are three ways to get to Honolulu. The first is to fly with one of the commercial airlines. In 1936, however, Hawaii was not the tourist resort that would later become. Flights to Hawaii are infrequent at best – perhaps five a month.

Because of the American naval presence on Oahu, military planes fly there on an almost daily basis. If the characters have any contacts in the military, they can probably find a way to negotiate travel to the islands with a cargo plane.

The final way to reach Hawaii is by ship. Cargo vessels loaded with Hawaiian sugar and pineapples dock at San Francisco harbour quite often. It shouldn't be too difficult to arrange return passage with a willing captain.

Regardless of which method the characters use to get to Hawaii, they can begin to learn something of the situation there while en route. The Gamemaster should present as much color and local history as possible.

The commercial airline can provide copies of Hawaiian newspapers, such as the *Honolulu Advertiser*. These should give the characters a few insights into Hawaiian culture.

A trip with the US Navy will be a different experience altogether. Few marines stationed on Hawaii grew up there. For this reason, blatant racism towards the native Hawaiians and the Japanese (so common in America at that time) will be the rule.

If the characters take a ship, they'll learn of the Japanese workers in the sugar plantations, and their difficult working conditions. The Japanese are considered diligent workers by the plantation owners.

Cut To

Once the characters arrive in Honolulu airport, Honolulu Harbor, or Pearl Harbor, cut to Scene 2: Honolulu Aloha.

Tetsuo Fuchi Editor of Hawaii Jiji

AGILITY 7

Dodge 8

DEXTERITY 8

Vehicle Piloting: Wheeled 9

STRENGTH 7

ENDURANCE 8

INTELLECT 12

Deduction 13; Forgery 13;
Journalism 14; Perception 13;
Photography 13

MIND 11

Research 13

CONFIDENCE 8

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9; Etiquette 10

Life Points: 4

Equipment: Japanese passport, camera,
tailored suit.

Tetsuo Fuchi is the editor of *Hawaii Jiji*, a Japanese newspaper with an Imperialistic slant that is published in Honolulu. Born and raised in Japan, Tetsuo came to Hawaii with his family to work on the sugar plantations when he was 16 years old. He saved his share of pay, and, with the help of his parents, returned to Japan at age 28 to attend university. After a brief service with the Japanese Imperial Army, Tetsuo returned to Hawaii to start up his own newspaper.

Tetsuo has spent almost equal amounts of time in Japan and Hawaii, and considers himself a citizen of both places. His time in the Japanese Imperial Army, however, cemented his loyalty to the Emperor. He believes that Hawaii belongs to Japan, and that the American *haoles* should go back to the mainland. Because of his position as publisher and editor of his newspaper, Fuchi has gained a great following of supporters many willing to fight for their cause, if necessary.

SCENE 2: HONOLULU ALOHA

The Situation

In the eyes of the characters, Honolulu is sure to seem like paradise. The temperature is warm and tropical and the people are relaxed and friendly. Coconut palm trees sway in the gentle breeze, and an inviting ocean laps at the long sandy beaches. The spirit of *aloha* is evident everywhere.

Once the characters get their bearings, it shouldn't be too difficult to find the editorial office of *Hawaii Jiji*. Located in the Japanese district of Honolulu, the office is found on the second floor of an old building that has seen one too many tropical storms. The paint is peeling from its sides, and several of the windows are boarded up. The walls beside the creaking wooden stairs are lined with posters written in Japanese.

The office of Hawaii Jiji is small and cramped. On the day the characters arrive, there are six people working in the office – answering the phones, writing columns, and laying out next week's issue of the paper. The door to Tetsuo Fuchi's office is half open. Inside the office, the characters can see him arguing with someone on the phone. Unless one of the characters speaks Japanese, this conversation will be totally unintelligible. If one of the players does speak Japanese, he or she will hear Fuchi talking to a creditor.

Once Fuchi spots the characters, he motions for them to come into his office and sit down. He bows once, shakes their hands, and then begins to speak in good English: "Welcome to Hawaii. It is a great honor to meet with you. I apologize if you have been inconvenienced in any way, and I will do my best to make your stay here in Honolulu as pleasurable as possible.

"As my colleague Yonai described, the legend of the Long Knife is an important one in Hawaiian history. If it turns out that this mystical weapon is truly the sword of a Japanese fisherman, it could rewrite the history of these islands."

Fuchi spends some time answering the characters' inevitable questions. He'll provide as much detail as he can about the legend of Long Knife and the history of King Kamehameha. He explains that he believes the sword to be buried with the king in one of the lava tubes located above Kealakekua Bay on the island of Hawaii, near the town of Kona. Fuchi offers to pay \$3,000 if the characters can find the artifact, recover it, and return it to him.

If asked why he, a newspaper editor, is trying to recover the artifact, his answer will be simple: "The Japanese and the Hawaiians have not had the best of relations. If we can prove that our people have a closer bond with the Hawaiians it can help to ease the tension between our cultures. The sword belongs here in Hawaii. If archeologists from the University

- of Hawaii discover it first, it is sure to be sent back to the United States. That would be a crime, as the sword belongs in Hawaii."

- In truth, of course, Fuchi believes little of this. If he can recover the sword it will be used to accompany a rallying cry for the Japanese to rise up against the Americans and push them from the islands. Hawaii will be ripe for Japanese conquest.

- Fuchi puts the characters up for a night in an inn on Waikiki beach, and explains that a seaplane departs for Kona in the morning. He urges them to get a good night's sleep, as they have much work to do.

The Action

If the characters accept the challenge of finding Long Knife, Fuchi thanks them repeatedly. If they do not, he expresses disappointment, and wishes them luck in the future.

The University of Hawaii has a very good library, specialized in Hawaiian history, and the characters will probably want to do some research before heading off to Kona. The library also contains back issues of *Hawaii Jiji* that the characters can look through. If they read the English section of the paper, it will seem innocuous enough – mostly articles detailing Japanese current events as they relate to Hawaiian citizens. If the characters get someone to translate the Japanese section into English, it will become apparent that they're reading little more than propaganda.

The characters may also want to meet and discuss their mission with someone from the archeological department at the University. If they do, it will become apparent that desecrating the burial site of King Kamehameha would be a terrible crime in the eyes of the Hawaiian people. (Of course, if the characters are archeologists, that kind of thing goes on all the time. It's all in a day's work.)

- The archaeologist will also tell them about Pu'uhonua O Honaunau (The Place of Refuge), which stands on the Southern shore of Kealakekua Bay. If the characters could find Long Knife and take it to this sacred spot, the *alii* of Hawaii would be sworn to absolve them of the crime of desecration.
- (Note: This is a very important piece of information, and it's vital that the characters find it out somehow. They could learn it from the library, or Fuchi could supply it. Alternatively, they could learn it from Toshi Murakami in Scene 3.)

- If the characters attempt to dig into Tetsuo Fuchi's background, they'll find little. Firstly, they're out of their element here in Honolulu; all of their contacts are back in the mainland. In addition, Tetsuo expects the characters to check up on him, and therefore he's on his best behavior.

LICENSED T-SHIRTS



BCG2400 Space Marine



BCG2700 Tyrannid



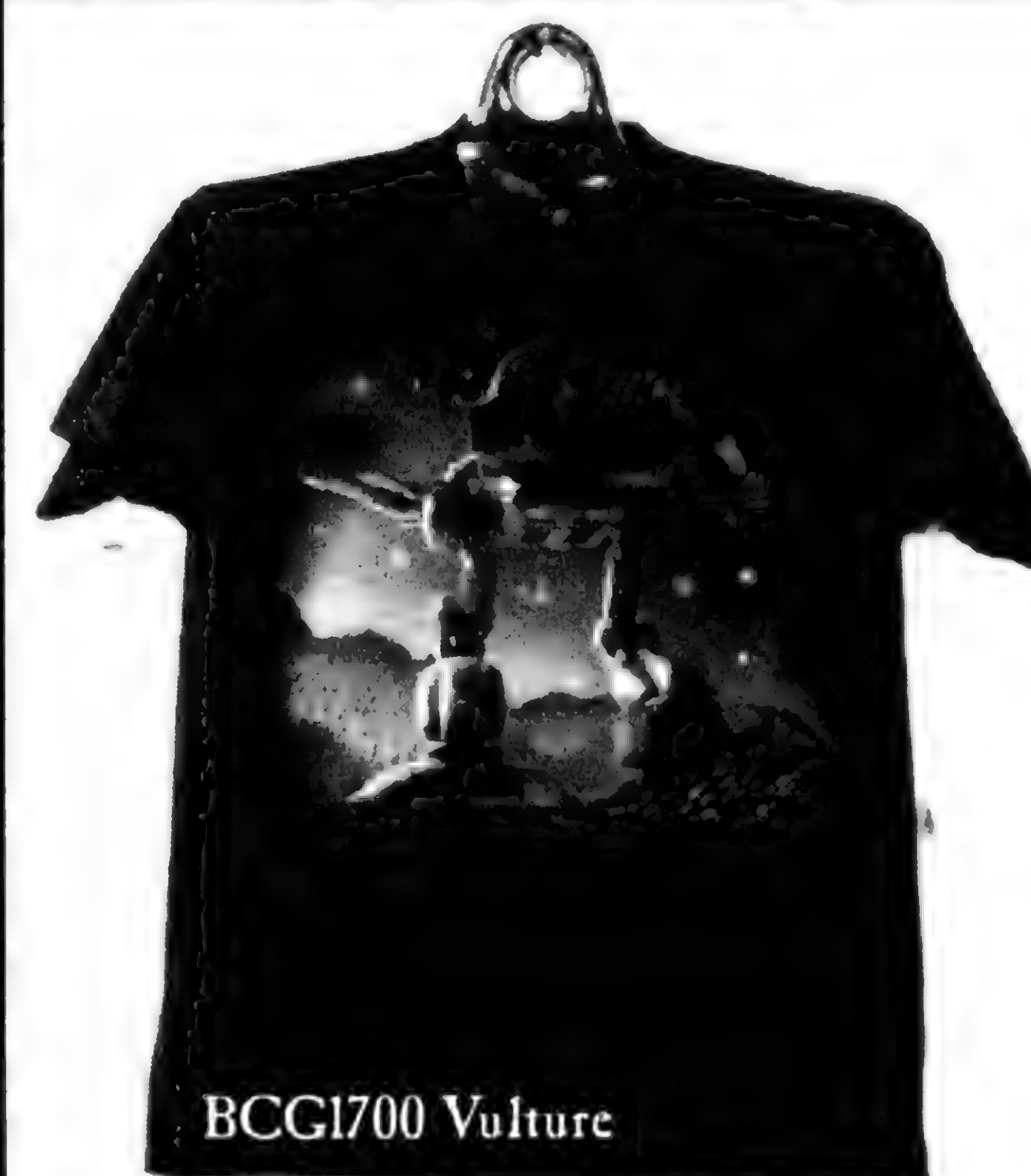
BCG2600 Chaos Marine



BCG1300 Elemental



BCG 7000 Illuminati



BCG1700 Vulture



BCG5200 Shadowrun



BCG4200 Tequila Bottle



BCG3500 Oriental Joker

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Cut To

The next morning the characters have a seaplane to catch in Honolulu Harbor. When they board their plane, cut to Scene 3: In the Shadow of Mauna Loa.

SCENE 3: IN THE SHADOW OF MAUNA LOA

The Situation

The twin engine seaplane launches from Honolulu Harbor, climbs to 1,000 feet, and makes its journey to Kona. On the left side of the plane, the characters can see the islands of Molokai, Lanai, Maui, and Kahoolawe as they fly past them. Finally, after a two-hour flight, the plane lands near the Kona docks on the western side of Hawaii.

As the plane gently docks, a Japanese man walks along the pier. He waits until the characters disembark, then introduces himself as Toshi Murakami. He asks if he may drive the characters to their hotel.

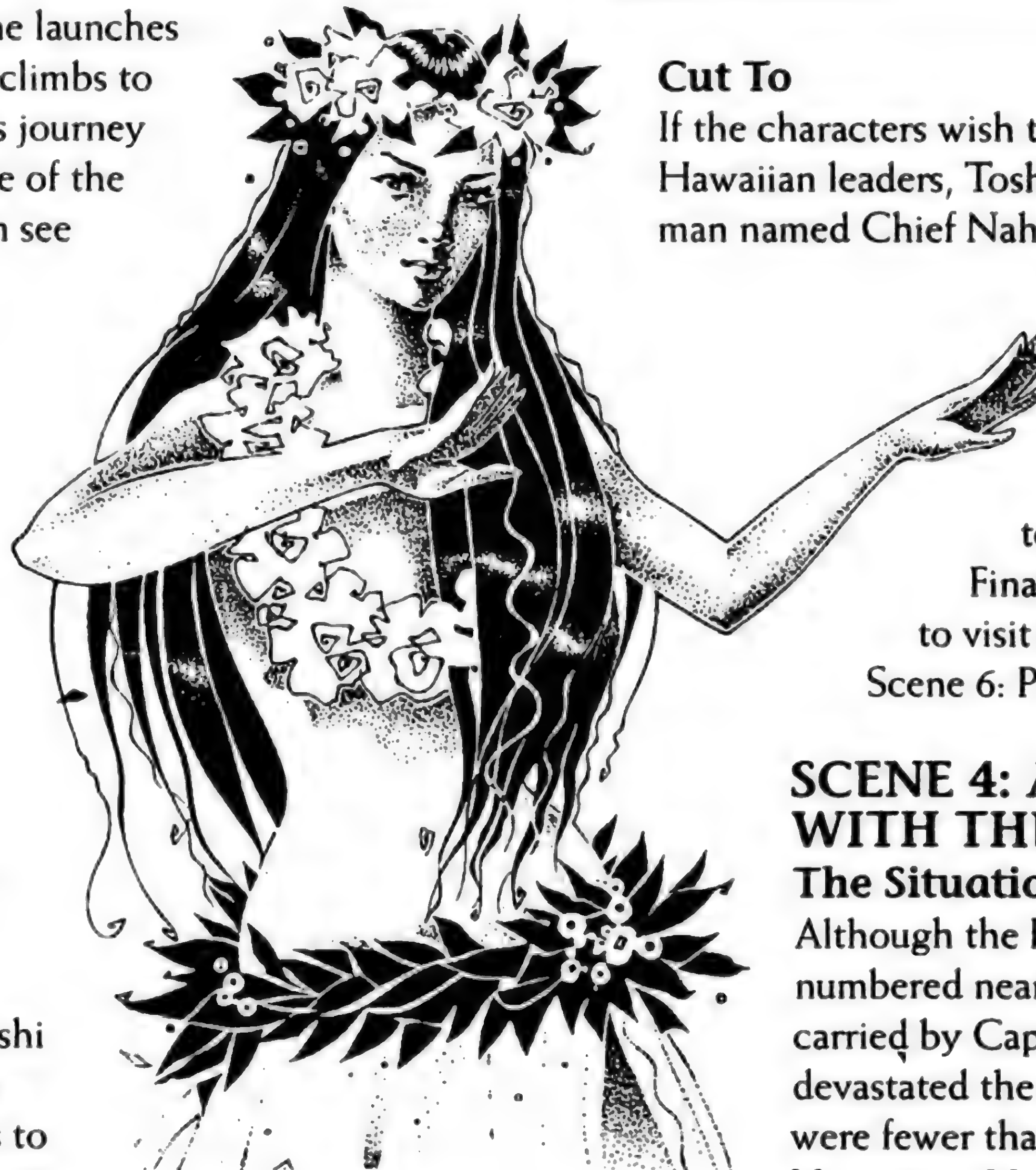
Tetsuo Fuchi has already booked the group into the Kona Islander, which is located on the waterfront in the center of town. A mere twenty years old, the Kona Islander is an elegant and modern building, usually reserved for the colleagues of sugar and pineapple plantation owners. There are few actual "tourists."

The Action

At this point, the characters are on their own. Their guide, Toshi Murakami, is more than happy to provide them with any assistance he can provide. He's an administrator for one of the sugar plantations of the island, and is a friend of Fuchi's. A friendly and knowledgeable man, Murakami has lived on Hawaii his entire life. The races mix freely on the Hawaiian Islands, and Murakami is friends with many American, Japanese, and Hawaiians. He has many resources at his disposal.

If asked, Toshi is more than happy to drive the characters eight miles down a dusty gravel road to the village of Captain Cook – the closest American settlement to Kealahou Bay. Or, if they wish, he can take them to meet one of the *alii* (chiefs) of the

- island to discuss its history. He recommends that the
- players visit Pu'uhonua o Honaunau (The Place of
- Refuge), since many of the rituals of Kamehameha
- were performed there.
- The island of Hawaii has few other resources
- that the characters can take advantage of. The library
- in Kona is small and inadequate, and supplies on the
- island are scarce.



Cut To

If the characters wish to meet one of the local Hawaiian leaders, Toshi recommends they visit a man named Chief Nahoa; cut to Scene 4:

Audience With the Chief. If the characters decide instead to investigate Kealahou Bay for themselves, cut to Scene 5: Kealahou Bay. Finally, if the characters choose to visit the Place of Refuge, cut to Scene 6: Pu'uhonua o Honaunau.

SCENE 4: AN AUDIENCE WITH THE CHIEF

The Situation

Although the Hawaiian people once numbered nearly 300,000, diseases carried by Captain Cook and his crew devastated the population. By 1936, there were fewer than 4,000 pure-blood Hawaiians. However, the Hawaiians are

- an open race and had no hesitation choosing partners
- from among the other races that immigrated to the
- islands. The blood of the Hawaiians pumps through
- the veins of many islanders.

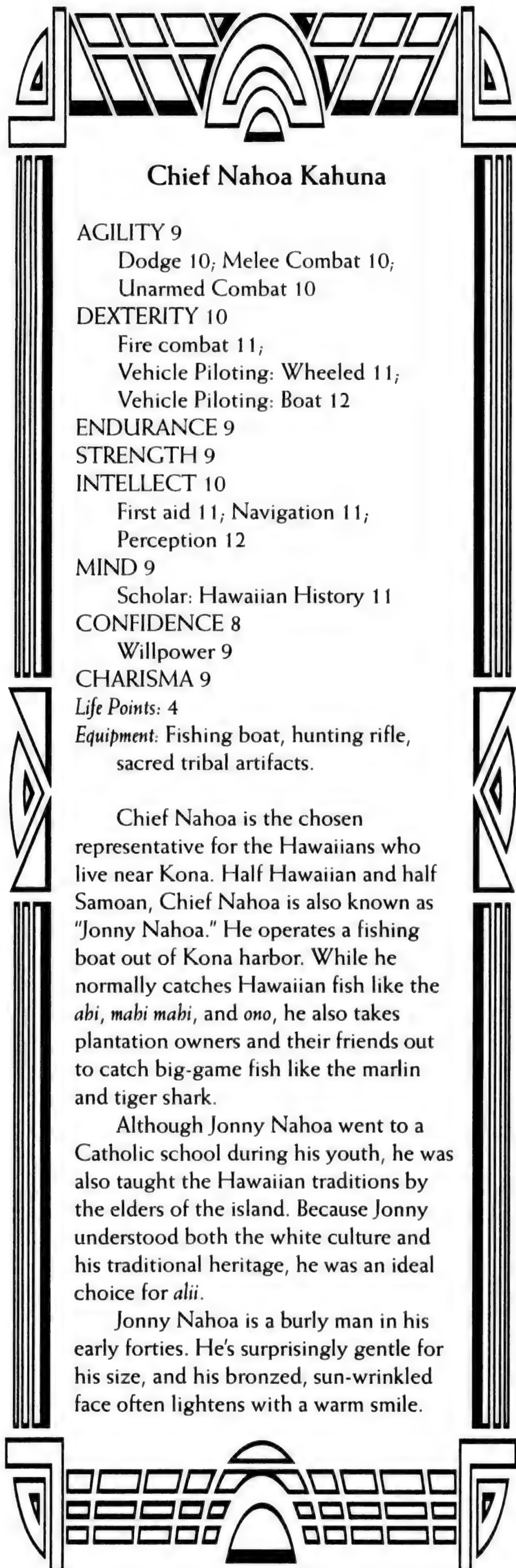
- Part Hawaiian and part Samoan, Chief Nahoa is
- the *alii* of the Hawaiians who live in the Kona district
- of Hawaii. As Hawaii has long been under America's
- influence, the necessity for true Hawaiian leaders has
- declined to almost nothing. Still, the natives believe
- strongly in maintaining their culture.

- It's assumed that the characters are introduced to
- Nahoa by Toshi Murakami, however, almost anyone
- on the island can point them towards the chief. His
- knowledge of Hawaiian history is better than that of
- anyone else on the island.

The Action

- The characters are most likely to find Chief Nahoa at
- the Kona docks, working on his boat, the
- *Humubumunukunukuapua'a* (Hawaiian for a local fish).
- It's obviously a fishing vessel.

- Initially suspicious of the characters (his Attitude
- is Neutral), Nahoa will become even more so if they
- demand information about the burial site of King



Chief Nahoa Kahuna

AGILITY 9
Dodge 10; Melee Combat 10;
Unarmed Combat 10

DEXTERITY 10
Fire combat 11;
Vehicle Piloting: Wheeled 11;
Vehicle Piloting: Boat 12

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

INTELLECT 10
First aid 11; Navigation 11;
Perception 12

MIND 9
Scholar: Hawaiian History 11

CONFIDENCE 8
Willpower 9

CHARISMA 9
Life Points: 4
Equipment: Fishing boat, hunting rifle,
sacred tribal artifacts.

Chief Nahoa is the chosen representative for the Hawaiians who live near Kona. Half Hawaiian and half Samoan, Chief Nahoa is also known as "Jonny Nahoa." He operates a fishing boat out of Kona harbor. While he normally catches Hawaiian fish like the *abi*, *mahi mahi*, and *ono*, he also takes plantation owners and their friends out to catch big-game fish like the marlin and tiger shark.

Although Jonny Nahoa went to a Catholic school during his youth, he was also taught the Hawaiian traditions by the elders of the island. Because Jonny understood both the white culture and his traditional heritage, he was an ideal choice for *alii*.

Jonny Nahoa is a burly man in his early forties. He's surprisingly gentle for his size, and his bronzed, sun-wrinkled face often lightens with a warm smile.

Kamehameha and the location of Long Knife (his Attitude will worsen by one step). Pushing for more details increases his Hostile Attitude, possibly pushing him to Enemy. (Additional modifiers can be found on page 81 in the *Master Book*.) However, if the characters can somehow trick or charm Nahoa into providing information, he will relate to them a story that his great-grandfather told him:

"My great-grandfather was only six years old when King Kamehameha was buried above Kealakekua Bay. When the *kapu* breaker was lowered down the cliff, no one was allowed to watch him bury the body. To do so was *kapu*, and brought certain death. My great-grandfather, however, was just a child, and he snuck through the underbrush to the north side of Kealakekua Bay. He watched as the *kapu* breaker chose a lava tube, and deposited the King inside. The rope was cut, and the man fell to the waiting sharks below."

If pressed for details, Nahoa will become suspicious again. He firmly believes that to violate the burial site of Kamehameha would be a terrible crime. However, if the characters are careful, and perhaps even use the Charm or Persuasion skill, Nahoa will provide one last clue to Long Knife's location:

"It was late afternoon, and my grandfather remembered seeing the spirit of the shark guard the entrance of the cave until the sun went down. Seeing this apparition frightened him so terribly that he believed the gods would punish him for his foolishness. Apparently they chose not to do so; he lived until he was ninety years old."

The best way to trick Nahoa is to pay him to go marlin fishing. This will count as an appropriate bribe that lowers the Difficulty Number (DN) as per the Bribe modifier (see page 81 of the *Master Book*).

When Nahoa takes guests out on the water, he tends to discuss the history of the island quite openly. Any character with skill in Fishing, or Survival: Ocean can have a go at catching a 500-pound marlin. They're hard to catch, though, and put up a terrible fight; apply a DN Modifier of -5.

Cut To

If the characters decide it's time to investigate Kealakekua Bay and find Long Knife, cut to Scene 5: Kealakekua Bay. If they prefer to visit the Place of Refuge, cut to Scene 6: Pu'uhonua o Honaunau.

SCENE 5: KEALAKEKUA BAY

The Situation

Kealakekua Bay is located six miles south of Kona near a village called Captain Cook. Traditionally a place of enormous history and significance, it is the place the Captain Cook and King Kamehameha first met. It was also the place of Cook's death in 1778; a

marble monument commemorating this tragedy stands at the northern shore of the bay.

The characters will understand why the body of Kamehameha was never found when they look at the sheer cliff face that is riddled with lava tubes. If they were to search the tubes one after the other, it would take them years to find the body of the King.

The shore of the bay is lined with an enormous coral reef, and the bottom drops off quite steeply. During the late afternoon, white-tipped reef sharks enter the bay to feed.

Action

At this point, the characters will probably search for the body of King Kamehameha.

The problem is that there are so many lava tubes that they would have to spend years searching. Furthermore, the local natives would consider this kind of action to be *kapu*, and would react negatively to a unified search effort.

Instead, the characters need some sort of clue that will tell them where the lava tube is.

If the characters met with Chief Nahoā, he related a story about how his great-grandfather saw the burial of King Kamehameha. He said that "the spirit of the shark guarded the cave until the sun went down." If the characters wait until late afternoon, long shadows stretch across the jagged lava rock wall. In fact, at approximately 6:00 pm, one set of shadows looks like the jaws of a shark. At the center of the "mouth" is a lava tube. This is the entrance to King Kamehameha's tomb.

If the characters received information about the shark spirit shadow, the DN for noticing it is 10. If the players haven't realized that they're looking for a shadow, the DN is 13.

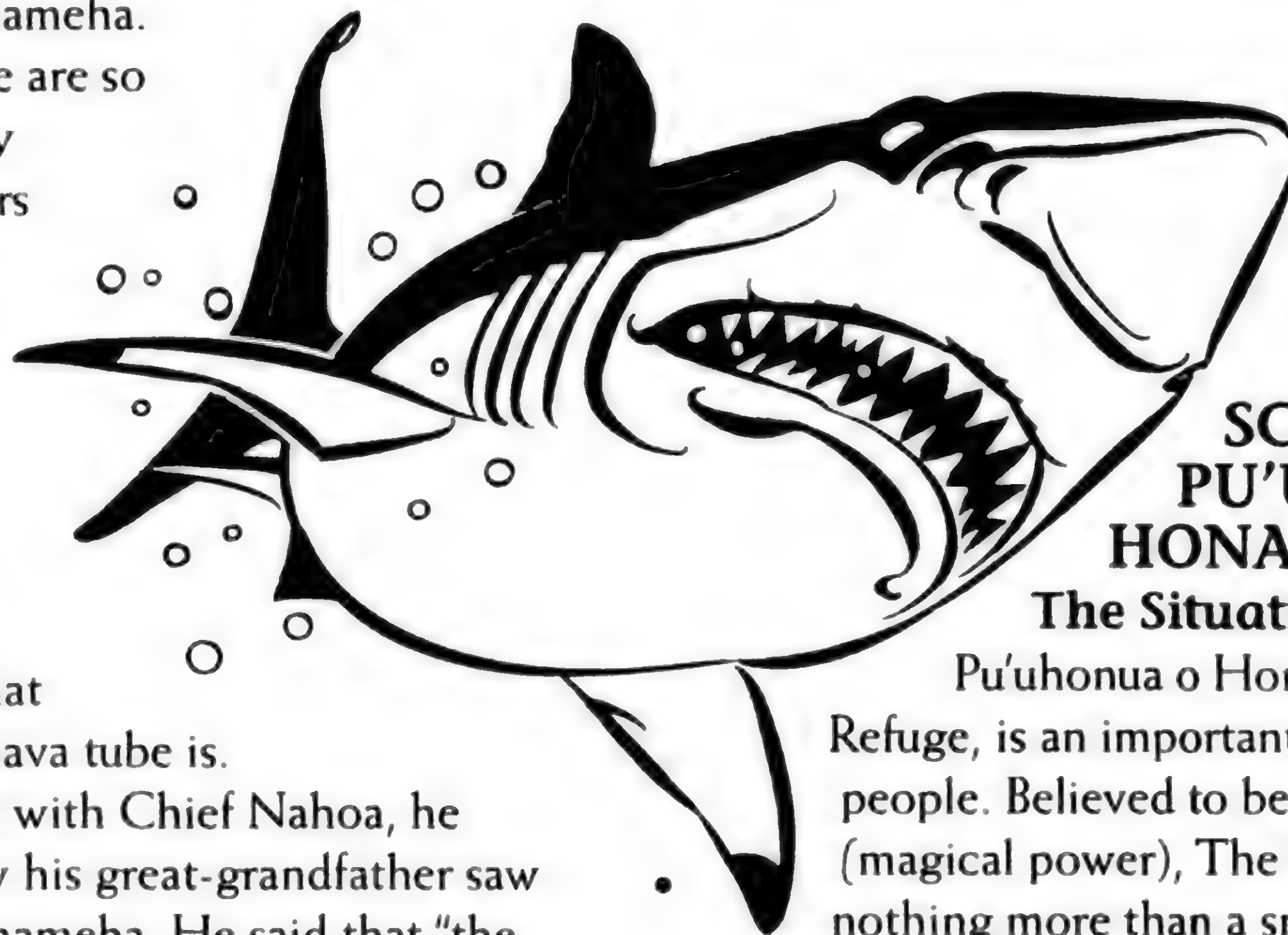
There are two ways to get to the mouth of the cave, which is approximately 50 feet down from the top of the cliff. The first is to anchor a rope at the top of the cliff and rappel down. To do so requires a Climbing roll with a DN of 8. However, the lava wall is jagged and will quickly saw through a rope that rubs against it. The rope will be cut by the sharp rock edges in six rounds, so the character needs to climb down there before that amount of time passes.

This need to climb down quickly increases the DN of the Climbing rolls to 13 (base DN is 13, -3 for rope, +3 for pushing). Steps A-D are all Climbing rolls with a DN of 13. If the character does not complete all four steps before the six rounds have

- passed, the rope is cut and the character must either
- make a Strength roll to grab onto the rock face (DN 10) or fall into the water below.

- The other way to get to the mouth is to climb up from the bottom. The lava rock is very rough and
- there are many handholds; however, the rocks are sharp, and anyone climbing without gloves will cut
- their hands. Climbing the wall requires a Climbing skill roll (DN 12).

- If one of the characters falls from the cliff, use the rules on page 91 of the *Master Book* to determine
- damage. If a character falls into the water with hands
- cut from the sharp lava rock, blood in the water will
- attract a group of white-tipped reef sharks.



Cut To

If the characters actually get into the mouth of the cave, cut to Scene 7: In the Tomb.

SCENE 6: PU'UHONUA O HONAUNAU

The Situation

Pu'uhonua o Honaunau, or The Place of Refuge, is an important place for the Hawaiian people. Believed to be a reservoir of *mana* (magical power), The Place of Refuge looks like nothing more than a small, coconut-tree grove, perched at the edge of the water. A rock wall, made from piled lava rock encloses the area.

- It was within this place that the *alii* of Hawaii performed some of their most sacred of rituals. To this site, chiefs brought their newborn sons, and it was here that the burial rites were performed.

- The Pu'uhonua o Honaunau served one other purpose. If those who broke the tribal law of the
- Hawaiians could make their way to this place, they would be absolved of their crimes – no matter how
- severe.

The Action

- The first time the characters come to The Place of Refuge, they are met by a Hawaiian named Lihuni. He is the caretaker of the sacred place, and will explain the ancient legends to the characters. If they wish to look around, he will be more than happy to accompany them.

- If the characters didn't learn about the final resting spot of King Kamehameha (see Scene 4: Audience with the Chief), they might also be able to learn it from Lihuni. (Just make the child who saw the burial Lihuni's great-grandfather instead of Nahoā's.)

Once the characters decide to find the tomb of King Kamehameha, cut to Scene 5: Kealakekua Bay. If they wish to meet with Nahoā, cut to Scene 6: Audience with the Chief.

SCENE 7: IN THE LAVA TUBE

The Situation

A lava tube is caused when a crust forms over top of a river of molten lava. The hot lava continues to flow inside, and the roof cools and grows thick. Finally, the eruption ends, and the hot lava completely exits the nearly-circular tube into the ocean. What remains is a tunnel, often travelling for miles, that extends deep into the rock.

The burial site for King Kamehameha is a four-foot-high lava tube that extends 200 feet back into the cliff. At the end of the tube is a jumbled pile of lava rocks, placed here by *kapu* breaker who chose Kamehameha's final resting place. Behind this pile of rocks is the tomb of Kamehameha.

The Action

As soon as one of the characters makes it into the tunnel, he or she makes a repulsive discovery. The tunnel has long been the home of hundreds of Hawaiian bats, and they line the ceiling. The floor is covered with hundreds of years worth of guano, which smells terrible. Because the tunnel has such a low ceiling, anyone who enters will probably have to duck down, maybe even crawl on hands and knees through this filth.

Explorers must succeed in an Endurance roll or vomit from the smell. Furthermore, entering the cave scares the bats, which fly out shrieking. Anyone in the mouth of the cave when this happens must make an Agility roll, or be driven from the cave entrance. (Watch the first step; it's a biggie.)

Once the bats have flown from the cave – and once the characters have purged their stomachs – they're free to explore the cave, which extends 200 feet to a pile of rocks. The characters will have to take several minutes to remove the rocks by hand. This done, the body of King Kamehameha lies before them.

Curled into a kneeling position, the body has been wrapped with strips of cloth. Piled high around his body are his treasures. As the Hawaiian islands were bereft of minerals, Hawaiian treasures consisted of carved fish and animal bones, feathered cloaks, and wooden statuettes. There's also a musket, obtained from trading Captain Cook. There's not an ounce of gold, silver, or precious jewels in sight.

Beside the body of Kamehameha is a long wooden box, with a strange glow emanating from it. If the characters open the box inside the tunnel, they will be blinded for several minutes by the light of the

White-Tipped Reef Shark

AGILITY 10

Swimming 15; Unarmed Combat 13

DEXTERITY 2

STRENGTH 10

ENDURANCE 10

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 6

Perception 10; Tracking 10

MIND 4

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 17; Willpower 20

CHARISMA 3

Life Points: None

Natural Tools: Leathery hide, armor value TOU + 1/11; teeth, damage value STR+4/14.

Description: White-tipped reef sharks are recognizable by their white tail and dorsal fin. They typically grow six feet long; although some specimens have reached lengths of ten feet. Normally timid and non-aggressive, the scent of blood in the water can drive them into a terrible feeding frenzy.

- object contained within it. If, however, they open the box out in the sunlight, their eyes should be okay.
- This glowing artifact is Long Knife. It is three feet long and appears to be a long Hawaiian-style knife, but made of a silvery material that glows with an unearthly brilliance. One end of the artifact has been wrapped with a leathery cloth to protect the hand of the wielder. The blade is so sharp that it will cut straight through solid rock with little effort. This is truly a mystical artifact.
- In truth, Long Knife was presented to the Hawaiian people by their gods so that King Kamehameha could eventually recover it and use it to unite the islands. Now the characters have found it. However, for Long Knife to maintain its power, it must be in close proximity to the body of King Kamehameha.
- For a brief period of time, the artifact glows with the light of the sun, but as time passes, it glows less and less. After three hours the glow fades entirely. Within another hour, the sword develops a rusty red colour which eventually covers it. One more after that, Long Knife decays into a pile of red dirt.

Cut To

Once the characters decide to leave the cave, cut to Scene 8 At the Mercy of the Hawaiians.

SCENE 8: AT THE MERCY OF THE HAWAIIANS

The Situation

Perched high above Kealakekua Bay, the characters now must make their way down the cliff. However, a Hawaiian local spotted the characters climbing into the cave, and has alerted the *alii* of the island. There is only one punishment for desecrating the burial site of the chiefs: death. The Hawaiians intend to forego the Americans' legal system, and plan to exact their own justice.

The Action

By the time the characters reach the base of the cliff, two Hawaiians carrying rifles arrive and start shooting. As the characters are quite a distance away, their aim will initially be quite poor. The characters also spot several Hawaiians running along the rocks on the north shore of the bay. They'll reach the burial site within minutes.

The characters' only hope is to jump into the bay and attempt to cross the one-mile distance to the Place of Refuge (see Scene 6: Pu'uhonua o Honaunau for a description of the site). If they can make it there, tribal law dictates that they must be absolved of their crimes; they will be allowed to go free. If, however, the characters are caught before then, they will be executed by the Hawaiians.

If the characters have a boat, things should go quickly. However, they'll be up out of the water, and a target for the Hawaiians armed with rifles.

The other option is for the characters to swim. The water is warm and they won't have to worry about hypothermia. There are several white-tipped reef sharks in the bay, but these will ignore the characters unless one of them is bleeding. Anyone with the Swimming skill can cross the distance in about 25 minutes; however, anyone without this skill will take much longer (as much as an hour). Once every 15 minutes, have the characters make Swimming rolls to see how they're doing.

If the characters make it across the bay (and manage not to get eaten by sharks or hit by a bullet) they'll be safe. The Place of Refuge has a small rocky beach that the characters can struggle up onto.

- As soon as the first character is inside The Place of Refuge, the Hawaiians stop firing their rifles.
- Chief Nahoa, recently updated about the actions of the characters, arrives shortly thereafter.
- Nahoa explains that, although the characters have committed a terrible act of desecration, tribal law dictates that they be absolved of their crimes. They're free to go. But he begs that the characters return Long Knife to its rightful place. Ancient legends tell that a terrible curse will befall whoever desecrates the grave of King Kamehameha and steals his treasures.
-
- **Cut To**
- Once the characters leave the Pu'uhonua o Honaunau, cut to Wrapping it Up.



Wrapping it Up

At this point, the characters will probably want to meet with Fuchi and explain to him what happened. If they removed Long Knife from the tunnel, it will be a worthless pile of red dirt by now.

Unless the characters can provide some sort of proof that they did indeed find the burial site of King Kamehameha (a photograph of one of them holding Long Knife, for example) Fuchi will be

furious. Convinced the characters are frauds, he chases them out of his office. Requests for payment will be vehemently turned down.

Even if the characters do provide proof that they found Kamehameha, Fuchi cares only about Long Knife. This may cause the characters to question Fuchi's loyalties. It seems that he did have some sort of unsavory purpose for the artifact. In either case, the

GARY HUDSON 95'

- characters will probably have earned a new enemy.
- If the group managed to remove any other objects from the tunnel, they'll soon realize that many museums are willing to pay a hefty price for these artifacts. Bone carvings, wooden statuettes, and feather cloaks will all be worth money.
- However, as Chief Nahoa described, a curse falls upon those who pillage the grave of King Kamehameha. For several years after this adventure, the characters will have some terrible luck (a CI or CII Bad Luck Compensation). Although many of their "unlucky" incidents could be dismissed as random chance, those who entered the tunnel (and who heard the grim words of Chief Nahoa) will understand their fate.
-

If the characters decide to return the objects to the burial site – especially if they return Long Knife before it crumbles to dust – they can regain the trust of Chief Nahoia. Even as the characters place the mystical weapon back in the tunnel, it begins to glow with an unearthly light once more.

Additional material for this adventure was provided by *Kansas Jim*. Playtesting was by Kansas Jim and Wayne L. Humfleet.

CONVERSION NOTES

By Alan Barclay

This adventure is ideally suited for the Justice Inc.™ roleplaying game by Hero Games. Since this game is out of print, conversions are offered here using the more current Hero system.

To convert this adventure to the Hero system, treat a DN target number of 10 as an unmodified skill roll. For each point above 10, give the player a -1 penalty, and for each point above 10 give a +1 bonus. DN Modifiers can be applied to Hero rolls as ordinary Hero modifiers (a DN Mod of -5 = -5 to the skill roll).

For Tetsuo Fuchi, use the stats for a Skilled Normal from the *HeroSystem Rules*, page 134. Give him INT 18, EGO 14, and PRE 13.

Most of the skills are easily translated to Hero equivalents. Set the Skill Rolls to the same numbers listed in the existing character write-ups.

Chief Nahoia can be a Competent Normal (also on page 134). Again, give him the same skills and rolls as appear in his write-up. Give him STR 15, CON 15, Fw Swords, and two 5-point levels in Hand-To-Hand Combat. You might even give him three or four Wrestling maneuvers.

When the characters come to climbing down the cliff, any character with climbing, Survival, or PS: Mountaineer will automatically realize how hard the sharp volcanic rock will be on their rope. Clever players may extend the life of the rope by padding the load-bearing angle – but let them think of this themselves. Even so, be sure to describe the many sharp projections that can also abraid the rope on the way down to keep the players tense.

If the character's don't pad the rope, have each make an unmodified climbing roll. If they fail, the rope breaks before they reach the cave. Do the same for ascents. Each successive use of the rope is at a cumulative -2.

A character can make a STR Roll to grab the cliff face. If the characters padded the rope, allow the first use of the rope at +2, with a -1 penalty for each use.

For the White-Tipped Reef Sharks, you can use the Mako Shark on page 167 of the *Hero Bestiary*, but reduce one level of Growth so it has STR 15, CON

- 20, BODY 14, and 30 STUN. Also, reduce the creature's attack to 1d6 HKA Reduced Penetration (2 x 1d6K with STR).

- Swimming characters should be half DCV and -2 OCV with any slashing or swinging attack due to water resistance. Be careful – a few of these sharks can easily make hamburger out of an unarmored swimmer.

- For the actual test of Swimming to the Refuge, have each character make a CON Roll at +1 per 1" of swimming above 2" or -2 per 1" below 2". If the roll is failed, increase crossing time by 5 minutes per point the roll was missed by. On a failure by 5 or more, the character founders and must make a the same roll at an additional -3 or begin to drown.

- The curse for disturbing Kamehameha can be a die of Unluck, but you might treat it as an 8- Hunted By Curse of Kamehameha. You can use this as a plot complication, or just give one of the characters 3d6 Unluck for the duration of an adventure.



Fraser Cain

- At the height of a promising writing career in the game industry, Fraser Cain threw it all away for the opportunity to run a software company. It proved to be a poor choice. Now, with only a computer and his imagination as aids, he has returned to the path of righteousness. Let all editors beware!

- Fraser's publication credits (before his self-imposed exile from game design) include *GURPS Supporting Cast* for Steve Jackson Games, and *Creatures of Barsaive* and *Double Exposure* for FASA Inc.. He was also a contributor to *Legends of Earthdawn*.



Alan Barclay

- Originally from Edmonton, Alan has played the Hero game system for a number of years. He writes science fiction and fantasy, and was the grand prize winner in the 10th annual Writers of the Future contest. He has also been published in *On Spec Magazine*. Alan has a degree in anthropology and has studied shotokan karate.



Gary Hudson

- Gary trained in fine arts and graphics at Kwantlen College, and currently works as the lead artist for Corono Productions, a fledgling computer gaming company. His art has appeared in the independent comic *Freelight*, and in the fan omnibus *Refractions*. He enjoys playing *Albedo*, *Villains & Vigilantes*, and the AD&D game's *Council of Wyrms*.

A GIFT FROM THE WEST

BY JOHN HART

Annandu: *The Gift From the West* is an adventure for the Middle Earth Roleplaying™ game, and is intended for players whose interest in the works of Tolkien is deep and abiding. Useful resources include the sourcebooks *Moria* and *Rivendell*, as well as any others covering areas the characters might travel to for assistance, such as *Mirkwood*, *Lorien*, or *Minas Tirith*.

Ideally, the player characters will be a high-level party of free peoples of Eriador, perhaps with a Dunadan Ranger and a Silvan Elf. The presence of a Noldo would render much of the mystery transparent, and so Noldo characters should not be included. Dwarves are unlikely to be found in the party, but perhaps one might be rationalised. If the party is small, and the players experienced enough to play high-level characters, it would not be unreasonable to run this adventure with 10th level characters.

LONG AGO

Narsil was the greatest weapon ever wielded by the hand of the Edain (save, perhaps, for Gurthang, the sword of Turin). It was broken at the death of its master Elendil, and its light extinguished.

Three years later, the shards of Narsil came to Rivendell, where dwelt Vandalil, Elendil's heir. But even at Rivendell, Narsil's light could not be rekindled.

Master Elrond, being farsighted, foretold that Narsil would be reforged when the Ruling Ring was found and Sauron returned. It was the hope of elves and men that these things might never come to pass, and so Vandalil was content to keep Narsil as an heirloom.

TODAY

Three thousand years have passed, and with them Arnor, the realm of Vandalil. The Dunedain of the North have dwindled; now their leader is Aragorn,

chief of the Rangers. He bears a broken sword, and he forgets nothing.

- In Mordor, Sauron has revealed himself and prepares for war. In the shire, Gandalf casts a ring into a halfling's fireplace and a long-held suspicion is confirmed. The time has come for Narsil to be reforged. But how?

DREAMS FROM THE WEST

- The party of PCs has been doing the work of the wise for some years, ever since a "chance" meeting with Gandalf. On more than one occasion they have received direction from Aragorn, though mostly in the form of suggestions as to what might be worth

doing. In this way, the party has been aiding the free peoples for years, while at the same time adventuring and (to some extent) enriching themselves as well.

For the last few months, the player characters have been hiding in southern Mirkwood, spying on the traffic between Dol Guldur and Mordor, and harassing it whenever possible. (The

- gamemaster will need to set this up, if this adventure is to be used in an ongoing campaign.) They have already been hunted several times by large parties of Orcs – which they managed to evade – and once by one of the Nazgul.

- Apparently someone approves of the party's courage and motives, because a dream comes to first one, then other members of the party. The dream comes several times to that member of the party most "noble" in the eyes of the Valar, and then to each of the others once. The dream is similar in form and occurs at the same time as those of Faramir and Boromir, (though the party might never know this).

- In the dream, a great blackness fills the eastern sky amid the growing sound of thunder. In the West, a pale light is seen. From the light is heard a distant voice (read the poem in the box).

Look in the mirror of Durin
a spark to rekindle Narsil:
spray from the bow of Vingilot,
and a light from the brow of Earendil.
The darkness in Gurthang of Turin
shall be a warning, so too
strife between kindred; set it at naught
and Halfelven's seeing made true.



As it was for Faramir and Boromir, the meaning of this message is probably beyond the party; they will have to seek out the wise to allow them to understand it. However, the gamemaster has long been numbered among the wise, so here is a translation, in part:

The mirror of Durin is the Mirrormere, Kheled-Zaram. It is a clear lake in the valley of Azanulbizar, at the east gate of Moria where Durin dwelt. It shows visions sometimes, and is always worth looking into if only for its beauty. Any dwarf will know this much, and it is likely that several members of the party will know who Durin was. They need only find a Dwarf...

Narsil is the sword that was broken. Aragorn possesses it now. Any Dunadan would know this much, and would also know that the sword is kept at Rivendell. A person of Gondor might conceivably know of Narsil, though he or she would think it lost long ago. Certainly none but the Eldar would remember that the sword was not reforged because its light was extinguished and could not be rekindled in Middle Earth.

Vingilot is the boat in which Earendil sailed into the West to beg for mercy for the Elves and Edain at the end of the first age. He sails her now in the sky, a Silmaril bound upon his brow. The Eldar, as well as the Edain of the North and the South, know Earendil as Gil-Estel, the Star of High Hope.

- The next three lines are an admonition that this mission must be accomplished in a manner that befits
- heroes on a quest from the Valar: no one who is not
- of the Enemy may be killed or coerced; if they are,
- the ultimate result of the quest will be darkness.

- Gurthang was a sword made of meteorite iron,
- and was perhaps the deadliest weapon ever wielded
- by a mortal hand. Unfortunately Eol, the Noldo who
- forged it, was filled with malice and gave up the
- sword only grudgingly. As a result, the bearers all
- came to bad ends – though Morgoth was at least as
- much to blame.

- The Kindred may be anyone – brothers or any
- other blood relationship – so this line can't be
- clarified through historical knowledge. What it
- actually refers to are the three Kindred of Eru, (Elves,
- Dwarves and Men). The party must take care to
- improve relations between the races, rather than
- inflaming the strife between them. The reasons
- behind this admonition should become apparent later
- in the adventure.

- The Halfelven included Earendil, who currently
- sees all of Middle Earth on a regular basis, as well as
- his wife Elwing, and her father Dior, and their sons
- Elrond and Elros. This line refers to Elrond's foresight
- that the sword would be reforged when the ring was
- found and Sauron returned. As with the reference to
- Narsil, only Dunedain, Eldar (and Bilbo) know this
- much.

The translation thus becomes: Go look in Mirrormere for the flame necessary to rekindle Narsil: a drop splashed from the sky (a meteorite), and light from the Silmaril. Don't make any enemies doing it or it will turn out worse than if you'd stayed home. But if you can manage this, the races will be close, and Elrond's prophecy will come true.

SEEKING WISDOM

Denethor was the master of the lore of Gondor. The meaning of Faramir and Boromir's dream largely eluded him. It is unreasonable to presume that any of the PCs will be more knowledgeable (no Noldo, remember?). Therefore they will have to go looking for help, and quickly. (Even a hobbit should realize that a dream like this is no trivial matter.)

The likely sources of help are largely dependant on party composition. Silvan Elves may seek the wise at Lorien or the realm of Thranduil, while animists or Beornings may choose to visit Radagast at Rhosgobel. Gondorians may opt to head for Minas Tirith. It is possible (though unlikely) that some other destination might also suggest itself to the PCs.

Any experienced travellers (which should be the entire party) should realize that Rivendell is too far away to reach in a realistic period of time. If truth be told, there are no other reasonable destinations beyond those listed above. If the characters go somewhere foolish, they should be greeted first with blank stares, then with withering comments about their lack of devotion. If the destination happens to be Theoden's court at Meduseld, Wormtongue will certainly inform Saruman, who then prepares a deadly ambush.

Wherever the PCs go, the journey itself should be an adventure: they are on a quest of no lesser import than that undertaken by Bilbo and the Dwarves many years before. They can count on at least one occasion of good luck, proving that they do have the favor of the Valar for so long as they deserve it. (This should strengthen their resolve.)

Be sure to maintain a sense of urgency: Boromir took one hundred and ten days to travel from Minas Tirith to Rivendell, by which time Aragorn had arrived with the hobbits. The characters must arrive with the annandu (the "gift from the West") before this journey is completed. Adding the fourteen days between the first dream Faramir had and Boromir's departure, the characters have one hundred and twenty- four days to solve the riddle of the dream and complete their quest.

RHOSGOBEL

North of the Old Forest Road is Rhosgobel, the dwelling of Radagast. It's not a very good choice of destination for the player characters, although it will

- likely be the first source of wisdom that comes to a Beorning's mind. Unfortunately, Radagast is not at home.

- If the characters set out for Rhosgobel with reasonable haste and earnestness, a Great Eagle spots them there and descends to speak with them. It asks: "Why are you here, at the home of my friend Radagast? Seeking what sort of wisdom/knowledge/ answers?"

- If the characters mention the dream, the Great Eagle questions them closely. It can offer the following wisdom:

- "A mirror of Durin? Durin was a Dwarf, was he not? Perhaps that lake by Moria, where the Dwarves and the Goblins fought long ago. That lake is always still, and casts strange reflections. I have never seen myself in it, though the stars wheel above.

- "Vingilot is the ship of Earendil, which he flies each night through the sky. Oft have we seen each other, and once my forefather Thorondor fought beside him. They slew dragons that night.

- "I will tell Radagast I have seen you here. Farewell!"

- TIMEKEEPING: From the forest near Dol Guldur to Rhosgobel is about twenty days, if there are no untoward events. Rhosgobel to the Dimrill Dale is another twenty-five days – or more, if the characters forget that the Anduin can only be forded without magic or boats at the Old Forest Road.

LORIEN

- Lothlorien! The Golden Wood. Only an Elf should have led the party here; Boromir feared the place unwisely, though his attitude is mirrored throughout Middle Earth. Still, if the party is free from malice they will live to leave again.

- It is highly recommended that the gamemaster reread the Iron Crown Enterprises (ICE) *Lorien* sourcebook, or at the very least reread the appropriate chapters in *The Lord of the Rings*. Lorien is simply too magical to skim over.

- The party will be followed from the moment they enter the Golden Wood, though it is Sheer Folly (-50) to think they might Perceive the fact. The Guardians do not attack the party unless the player characters treat the forest with disrespect – but neither will they allow them to wander unchallenged.

- Once the party has entered well into the forest and the Guardians have studied them and reported their presence, an Elf will greet the player characters from above, calling to them from the trees. He asks their names, and enquires as to their business in the forest of the Elves.

- If the party tells the simple truth, the Guardians

register surprise, but evince pleasure at such worthy motives. They show the party to a nearby flet, where the player characters may camp and wait for word from Galadriel. One of the Elves races off to carry the characters' message to her.

A day later, the messenger returns with another Elf. She identifies herself as Aerin, a handmaiden of Galadriel. She informs the party that her mistress knew of their arrival and that she has been sent her to answer their questions.

Aerin apologizes for the player characters not being invited to enter further into Lorien. Galadriel has felt something of the urgency of their mission, and she has learned of old that the realm of the Galadrim can sometimes hold visitors beyond the days of wise departing.

Aerin is a Noldo of great age (though not as great as her mistress) and she can explain much of the content of the dream:

➤ The "Mirror of Durin" is known to her. She gives a complete explanation.

➤ "Narsil is not known to me, nor to my lady. I believe it is a thing of the Edain, and not of the Eldar. What thing of the Edain would need aid from the West to be rekindled I can not say. Perhaps an heirloom of Numenor, that was Westernesse in your tongue."

➤ Her understanding of "Vingilot" and Earendil are more than complete.

➤ "Turin was of old an elf friend, and Gurthang the name given to his sword. Gurthang means 'Iron of Darkness', and black was its blade, if the old tales are correct. It was made of iron that fell from the sky.

"What malice was in it I know not, though it was said that it came to Turin through acts of ill will, and that Morgoth turned his hands red. Clearly you must avoid this."

➤ "Kindred" could be several things to her. She suggests the obvious, including the races that are the children of Eru.

➤ "Halfelven" could be any of the individuals named in the translation of the poem, but she suggests that while Earendil sees much, Elrond would be the easier to question. Since all of the others have passed away (and were his parents or other relations) he would know of the relevant seeing.

When the player characters have satisfied themselves that they have learned all they can from Aerin, she gives them gifts from the Lady Galadriel and bids them farewell. (The gifts of Galadriel are similar to those given to the Fellowship of the Ring.)

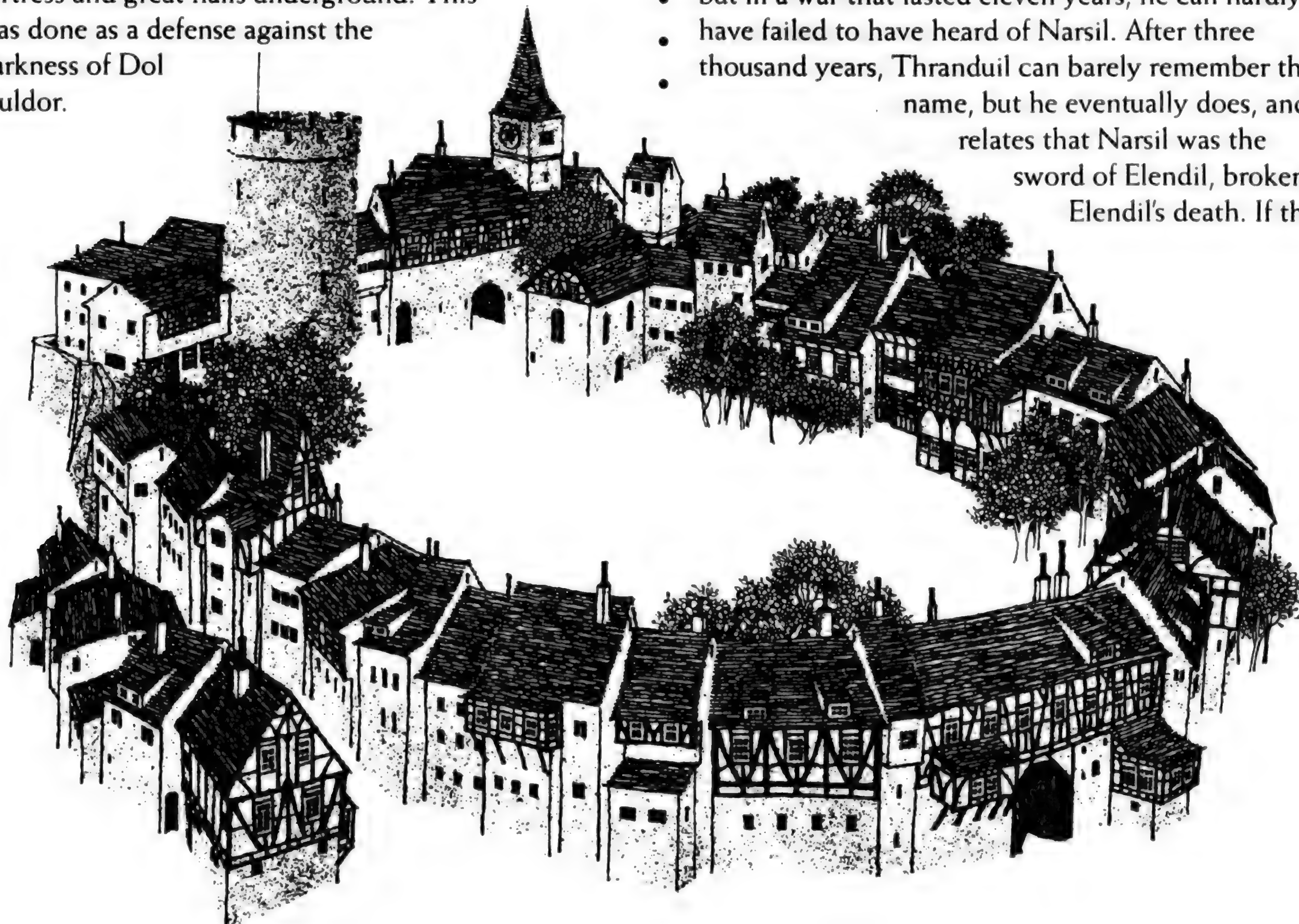
The Guardians escort the characters to edge of the forest, warn them of any parties of Orcs the gamemaster may have on their trail, and leave them, vanishing into the wood.



TIMEKEEPING: North to the Old Ford and south again to Lorien would take about forty days, barring ambushes, etc. If the player characters have a way to cross the Anduin, it should take no more than a week to reach Lorien. As a result, the party might lose any pursuers at the great river.

THRANDUIL AND THE WOOD ELVES

Thranduil, Sindar king of the Silvan Elves of Mirkwood, lives with his people about the Eryn Duir (dark mountains) in the north east of Mirkwood. There they have followed the example of Thingol of Doriath and delved themselves a fortress and great halls underground. This was done as a defense against the darkness of Dol Guldor.



If the player characters attempt the long journey to Thranduil's halls, they will learn much – but will have lost more time than they should have. The characters will be able to gain an interview with Prince Orophin, a nephew of Thranduil. Orophin is somewhat distrustful and haughty, but if the party is respectful and honest, they will soon be in the presence of Thranduil himself.

The king knows that Durin was the greatest of the Dwarven kings. What might have been his mirror is quite unknown to him, though Moria was his dwelling, so that would be a good place to start.

If the characters like, the king can send for a Dwarf, though it will take at least a week for one to come from Erebor. When the Dwarf arrives, he can

- clarify this point on the instant. He also offers/asks to go with the party.

- The Dwarf's name is Borin, and he wants to see Kheled-Zaram. He has his own opinion of what "Kindred" means, and he wants to be on hand if any "strife" arises, so that he may prevent it. He is as favourably disposed towards the Elves as any Dwarf.

- Thranduil himself was present at the great war that ended the second age; he commanded the Silvan Elves of Mirkwood and Lothlorien. His people were too proud to submit to the command of Gil-Galad, and so their losses were very heavy.

- Thranduil's contact with Elendil was minimal, but in a war that lasted eleven years, he can hardly have failed to have heard of Narsil. After three thousand years, Thranduil can barely remember the name, but he eventually does, and relates that Narsil was the sword of Elendil, broken at Elendil's death. If the

- sword is to be rekindled, then it must still exist. No doubt, says Thranduil, Elrond can tell them more.

- Thranduil offers what material help he can, though he has nothing to give in comparison with Galadriel. He urges the party to make as much haste as they can, and offers them a guide who will show them the speediest way from his realm. He also bids them to take care, as his people were attacked by Orcs from Dol Guldor on the same day that the player characters first experienced the dream.

- Thranduil's wisdom:

- > He knows about "Vingilot and Earendil".
- > "Gurthang and Turin" mean nothing to him.
- > To Thranduil, "strife between Kindred" recalls

the resentment between the three Kindred of Elves. His own history lies with the Sindar, against the Noldo: one reason why his people were not under Gil-Galad's command, and so took such terrible losses.

Thranduil speculates that the characters might do something to reunite all the Elves. This is a prospect he welcomes, since he greatly fears Sauron, as well as the inexorable growth of the nations of man.

➤ "Halfelven" refers to Elrond, who is wise, and sees many things. Thranduil does not recall any foresights Elrond may have had about the Kindred, but then, he hasn't seen him for three thousand years.

TIMEKEEPING: From the area of Dol Guldor to the realm of Thranduil is not less than thirty days – more if the Gamemaster wants to harry the party with the Orcs of Dol Guldor, as well as the Giant Spiders. (Any fan of *The Hobbit* is sure to enjoy these adversaries.)

From Thranduil to the east gate of Moria (and the Mirror of Durin) is another forty days.

MINAS TIRITH

Last city of the Dunedain in Middle Earth: Minas Tirith, the Tower of Guard, holds the answers to almost all of the riddle.

The realm of Gondor has been attacked by great Orcs out of Mordor just last month, so the city is in a state of high alert. When the characters approach the plains about the city, they will be surprised to find that there is a great work in progress: the men of Gondor are rebuilding the Rammas Echor – the outer wall that was originally built when Minas Ithil fell and was renamed Minas Morgul.

The wall is only partially rebuilt, and so the party may bypass it. Unless they are particularly stealthy, however, they will be spotted, and a mounted patrol will ride out from the city to challenge them.

The commander of the patrol will not allow the player characters to enter the city without a good reason, though any person who both looks "doughty and fair of mien" will be "welcome in Gondor's need." The commander accepts any explanation that the characters have come as volunteer soldiers. If the party includes Gondorians they may give the proper passwords and enter the city.

If the player characters tell anyone of their true purpose in coming to Minas Tirith they are greeted with surprise: everyone has heard of the dream of Faramir and Boromir, and the significance is lost on no one. If asked, any Gondorian of reasonable station can recite the words of their Captains' dreams.

Within the city, any Gondorians in the party

may go to the houses of lore. There, with the assistance of the Loremasters, they can search for the answers to the mystery. The Loremasters are very helpful, and within a day can explain the "Mirror of Durin," can name the original wielder of "Narsil," and can clarify the meanings of "Vingilot and Earendil," "Gurthang and Turin," and "Halfelven." Sadly, it was never known within Gondor what happened to the shards of Narsil.

Unfortunately for the investigators, Denethor gets wind of this, and so, also within the day, the player characters are brought into his presence. He subjects them to a gruelling hour of questioning, from which he is certain to learn far more than they. Realizing the true meaning of the dream (which he does not divulge to the party), he is aware that this foretells the end of his Stewardship, whether or not Gondor falls. He resents this bitterly and broods on these revelations.

The Steward orders the party to leave Gondor at once. Though he will not aid them, neither will he obstruct them, since this is the will of the Valar. Denethor is not at all evil – just sad and weary.

TIMEKEEPING: It is three weeks from Dol Guldor to Minas Tirith if the party can cross the Anduin under their own power. If not, then add another three and a half weeks for crossing the Anduin at the Old Forest Road.

The gamemaster is reminded that the last bridge at Osgilliath has just been destroyed by Boromir and Faramir, and that the entire east shore thereabouts is an enemy camp. If the player characters are forced to swim for their lives, remember that, of an entire company, only Boromir, Faramir, and one other survived a similar exploit. The characters will probably not drown, being heroes themselves, but they may be forced to sacrifice every item of equipment they have to save themselves.

From Minas Tirith north again to the Mirror of Durin is three more weeks.

While crossing Rohan there is a good chance that the player characters will be approached and questioned by an armed patrol. As always (at least among the free peoples) honesty and respect are the best policy. Rohan is just as hazardous as Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli will find it. The Rohirrim will not give or sell the party horses without an excellent reason, though any other sort of material aid is not unreasonable.

THE MIRROR OF DURIN

Mirrormere lies in a deep dale between two arms of the Misty Mountains. Above the Dimrill Dale stand three white peaks: Celebdil, Fanuidhol, and Caradhras, the Mountains of Moria. Kheled-Zaram is

a small, spearhead-shaped lake. It is, as the Great Eagle stated, perpetually still. Even at high noon it is deep blue in colour – darker than one would expect.

The entire dale is treeless, particularly in the smooth basin by the mere, and covered in grass. There are numerous ruined stoneworks here, and at one place beside the mere, a broken-topped stone column. This is Durin's Stone; here he first looked into Kheled-Zaram.

This is the point where the party first joins the thread of the dream. In Kheled-Zaram the characters can see the night sky as it was some time ago: perfectly clear, with Elendil high above the Mountains of Moria. As the characters look, a point of light falls from this constellation, growing brighter as it streaks across the sky toward a gap to the east of Caradhras and due north of the dale. The light vanishes into the gap, and an instant later a bright flash reveals a meteorite impact just over the mountains.

Nothing else is to be seen here, and the party would do well not to tarry, if only because they now have a firm direction and goal.

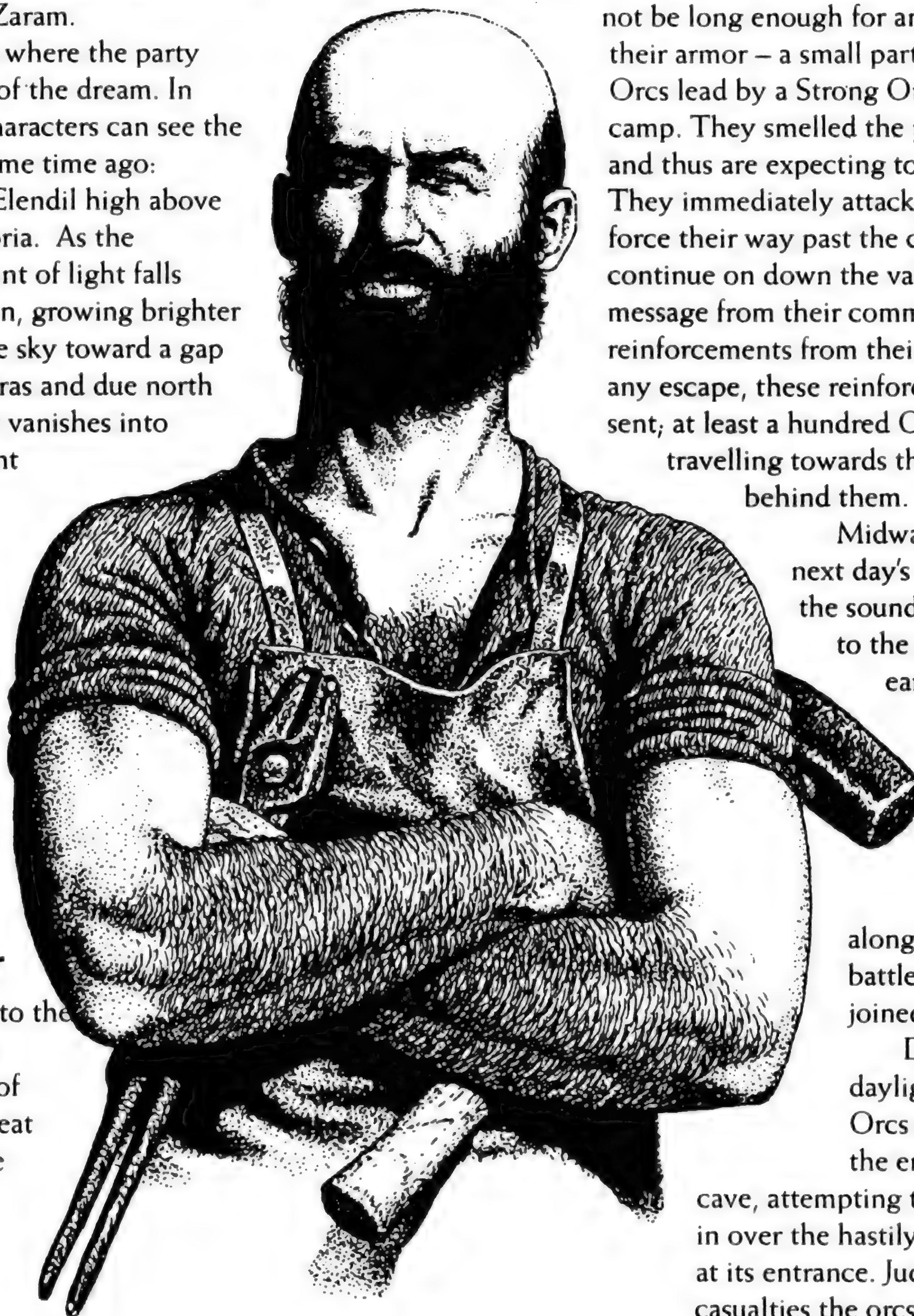
NORTH TO THE LIGHT

A nearly direct route to the point of impact takes the party to the foot of the Dimrill Stair, a great stair cut deep into the mountainside by Dwarven hands. It follows the mountain torrent that feeds Kheled-

Zaram, up a great series of short cliffs. At its top, the path turns west into the Redhorn pass, but the party must leave the path and go north east into a rugged mountain valley.

In the valley, travel is very difficult. There is no path; the narrow valley is full of broken rock, a small stream that must be waded time and again, and the occasional cluster of wind-twisted dwarf pines.

During one of the stream crossings, a successful Tracking Maneuver tells an alarming tale: it is Easy (+20) to see that someone has been through here



- recently, Medium (+0) to see that it was a large party of Orcs, Hard (-10) to see that they were lead by an olog-hai, and Very Hard (-20) to see that they were following a party of Dwarves.

- The first night the party is camped in the valley,
- the character on watch will automatically hear
- several pairs of heavy boots jogging toward the encampment. Two minutes later – which may not be long enough for anyone to put on their armor – a small party of five Weak Orcs lead by a Strong Orc charge into the camp. They smelled the player characters, and thus are expecting to encounter them. They immediately attack, attempting to force their way past the characters and continue on down the valley. They bear a message from their commander requesting reinforcements from their tribe in Moria. If any escape, these reinforcements will be sent; at least a hundred Orcs will be travelling towards the party, two days behind them.

Midway through the next day's wearisome travel, the sounds of battle come to the player characters' ears. Around the next bend is a small cliff, and in a stretch of valley thirty feet below the trail that winds along the cliff, a small battle has just been joined.

Despite the daylight, about fifty Orcs are milling around the entrance to a small cave, attempting to force their way in over the hastily constructed wall at its entrance. Judging from the casualties the orcs are taking from skilfully wielded axes, the defenders

- within are Dwarves.
- It is a Light (+10) Perception Maneuver to see a glow coming from the cave – obviously the Spark is within. With such a fascinating scene on hand, it is
- Hard (-20) to notice that the commander of the Orcs is standing on a ledge just above and behind the player characters' position, surveying the battle.
- Or at least, he *was* surveying the battle. With a vicious howl, the Olog-hai leaps down into the party, laying about himself with his flail. Following him are his two aides, both Strong Orcs armed with scimitars

and round shields.

This secondary battle attracts the attention of the Orcs assaulting the cave; first a few break off to join this new fray, then more and more in proportion to the player characters' successes.

The thirty-foot cliff (which forces the Orcs to climb to reach the player characters) is enough to prevent the party from being totally overwhelmed. The player characters should never face odds worse than two to one. If they are in serious danger of being overwhelmed, the Dwarves make a foray, saving the day. They lever over their wall (crushing several Orcs) then leap out, wielding their axes with deadly effect. Eventually, all of the Orcs lie dead.

TIMEKEEPING: It takes at least two days to travel from Durin's Mirror to the meteorite.

DWARVES AND DIPLOMACY

With grim smiles – and words of welcome and gratitude – the Dwarves greet their rescuers. Two Dwarves were killed, but eight are still alive. All are Warriors of 6th to 10th level, and hail from Erebor, The Lonely Mountain. They will not climb the cliff; the party must come down to them.

If the player characters offer any healing, the Dwarves are glad to receive it. Alternatively, they can offer healing to the player characters, if their limited means are better than the party's. All will go well, aside from any minor problems caused by the races of the two groups. (A party of Elven PCs, for example, will be greeted somewhat coolly, though by no means with any hostility.)

As soon as the meteorite is mentioned – or even alluded to – things cool off a bit. The Dwarves have fought (and some have died) for what they recognize as a great treasure. Their leader, Fundin, is not at all disposed to give up the prize: the meteorite.

If dealt with respectfully, Fundin reveals that the Dwarves had been on their way to Kheled-Zaram to look into the pool, hoping for some sort of sign. They intended to enter Moria, to seek out Balin and his followers if they are still alive.

A few nights ago, the Dwarves saw the meteorite descend and heard the impact echoing distantly through the mountains. They immediately left their path and hurried to the spot where it had landed. They hoped it would be an iron meteorite, for the properties of such metal are legendary.

The Dwarves did not really expect to find the meteorite, as it landed well beyond the horizon. To their surprise, it was easily discovered; the precious thing glowed almost blindingly bright. To their delight it proved to be iron, and of such a quantity as to suffice for at least a dozen weapons.

The Dwarves believe the meteorite to be a gift

- from Aüle, sent to them in what may be a time of need. They claim that the glow is proof of this, since they could not have found the meteorite without it.

- Fundin, if not told directly, speculates that the characters have also come in search of the meteorite. He states firmly that he will not give it up. The Dwarves were here first, some of them have died for it, and it is their rightful property. What he does not state (though it may be guessed) is that they will fight, and kill, and die, to keep it.

- This is a fair dilemma, and is the event foretold by the warning about strife between kindred (and the reference to Turin's Gurthang). If the player characters can find no diplomatic solution, and if they resort to force or magic or deception, the Dwarves will be enraged. They will fight until they are beaten off or killed to the last one – or until they recover their rightful property. If they are driven off, they will hound the characters to the bitter end, setting cunning ambushes and traps in the mountains, and following on the plains.

- Things are not entirely hopeless though. If the situation is handled with patience and some flexibility by the party, the Dwarves can be reasoned with. After all, what they really value is the metal. They will happily part with the light, which they lack the skill to use. It is, after all, the light that is needed to reforge Narsil.

- To reflect the gravity of the situation, this scene should be drawn out long enough that it begins to try the patience of the players themselves. The eventual act of cooperation (assuming it is forthcoming) is as much the reason for the dream as the meteorite was. The Kindred must cooperate fully to defeat Sauron.

- Note: if the players begin to bluster or show signs of impending violence, the situation might be saved by a fortuitous use of the word KINDRED, which, one hopes, will remind the players of their mission – and who the good guys are.

SOLUTION

- Once persuaded of the party's good intentions, their legitimate need, and their willingness to part with the iron once the light is extracted from the meteorite, the Dwarves are willing to discuss particulars. They allow the characters to examine the meteorite, which is an incredibly brightly glowing football-sized object.

- If the player characters know enough to go to Rivendell, the Dwarves willingly accompany them there. They mention the reason: they plan to consult with Gloin, whom they know is going to Rivendell to consult with Elrond.

- It is possible that the party might have missed learning of the Elrond connection, in which case the

Dwarves will suggest Rivendell, adding that the use of the light is beyond Dwarven wisdom, and is most likely the province of Elves, the wisest of whom are to be found in Rivendell.

FAILURE

As mentioned, the Dwarves cannot be parted from their treasure without a fight – one which the characters may well lose.

If the player characters do manage to take the meteorite by force, harry them mercilessly: to their deaths, in fact. Harass them with Giants in the mountains, then a Ringwraith or two when they reach the plains. They will never find Rivendell, no matter how hard they try.

They were warned.

THE JOURNEY TO RIVENDELL

Unfortunately, a piece of iron as large as the meteorite weighs over fifty pounds, and makes a tiring load. It is also something of a liability; it glows so brightly that it attracts a great deal of unwelcome and dangerous attention. Wherever the party goes now, it will be an eventful trip.

Fortunately, the Dwarves will insist on accompanying the party to Rivendell, and will also insist on sharing the load, so no one need be driven to exhaustion.

Fundin, despite his concerns about other Orcs (who will enter the valley the same way the characters did) informs the characters that he feels the way to go is back down the Dimrill Stair. The other direction is a trackless, mountainous waste, where they may all starve before they find their way down to the lowlands. On the other hand, it may be possible to avoid the Orcs by going that way.

He is not certain which route is best; it is up to the characters to make the final decision.

BACK TO THE REDHORN PASS

The trip back to the Dimrill Stair and the Redhorn Pass transpires uneventfully. At the top of the stair the Dwarves look wistfully down at the entrance to Khazad-Dum before turning away regretfully; they are not willing to lead others into the homes of their forefathers – although this will be left unsaid for the sake of diplomacy.

Over the Redhorn Pass and down into Hollin,

- things continue to go well. It is not until Hollin is left
- behind that trouble strikes. The meteorite, of course,
- is the reason; it is just too bright. First a pack of
- Dunland bandits are drawn to the light. They are of a
- number to trouble the company, though not to
- endanger it. The survivors follow the company for at
- least a week, attacking at inconvenient moments
- before finally being wiped out or driven off.

- A week after the bandits (and only three days
- from Rivendell) serious trouble arises: the Nazgul
- (who are on this side of the mountains looking for
- the ring) have sent three Trolls to investigate the
- light. The Nazgul themselves are unable to approach
- the light, and are unwilling to leave their more

important business. They thus simply charge into camp and attack. They will say nothing, and cannot retreat or surrender.

Finally the company passes out of danger, and into the region of Rivendell.

TIMEKEEPING: It will take the player characters thirteen days to travel from the point where they met the Dwarves to Rivendell.

NORTH THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS

If the company elects to ignore Fundin's opinion and forge ahead into the mountains, they will have a difficult time of it. As Fundin said, there are no paths, the way is

- very hard, and there is little to eat, though water is
- plentiful. In addition, the mountains are occupied by
- the servants of Mordor.

- The next pass through the Misty Mountains is
- the High Pass, where Thorin and company were
- ambushed years before. It is now kept open by the
- Beornings, but, as Gloin remarked, their tolls are
- high.

- **TIMEKEEPING:** To travel to the High Pass
- through the mountains takes two months, during
- which time the company is attacked repeatedly by
- Giants, Orcs, and Trolls.

- It would be much better to return to the foothills
- of the mountains and travel north to the High Pass
- that way. Inevitably the company will attract
- unwanted attention. Fortunately, by this time the
- Nazgul are in Eriador, searching for the Shire, or
- perhaps chasing Aragorn and the rest.



RIVENDELL AT LAST

The region of Rivendell is easily found, but unless the party has a member who can find it, (a Ranger perhaps), the actual location of the last homely house is magically elusive. In a day or so, the company is met by someone (perhaps even Boromir, if the timing is right) who is also on his or her way to Rivendell. Together they will find the way.

In Rivendell, the party is given a kind and honorable welcome, though certainly no one idolises them: there are so many other heros of note here.

The meteorite is taken away by the Elven smiths and the light is extracted. The party is present at the Great Feast the day before the Council of Elrond, but miss the Council itself.

CAMPAIGN SUGGESTIONS

This adventure could serve as the core of an extended campaign. The player characters' adventures could start several months earlier, when Aragorn (a trusted acquaintance) asks the party to keep watch on Dol Guldor for a while. The *Dol Guldor* campaign module from Iron Crown Enterprises contains sufficient material to convince the players that their true purpose is the frustration of the master of that hill of sorcery. The dream should come as a very dramatic surprise.

This adventure can be extended to almost any length. Once the player characters have had their moment of glory in Rivendell, there is still no end of noble toil in sight: Elrond sent out many scouts before the fellowship of the ring set forth, some of whom encountered great danger...



John Hart

Born in Germany, John has lived in every one of Canada's provinces and territories except P.E.I. He spent five years in the army as an engineer "blowing stuff up." He also spent time in the Society for Creative Anachronism.

John was introduced to AD&D in 1979 and has been gaming ever since. His current favorites are *Runequest*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and *TORG*. Although he spends his days working for a roofing company, his longterm aspirations are toward writing fiction.



Mike Crippin

Mike is a commercial artist who took his training at Kwantlen College in Vancouver. His designs have appeared on T-shirts, as well as on the covers of various bands' recordings. Mike formerly played AD&D, and currently enjoys *Warhammer 40,000*.

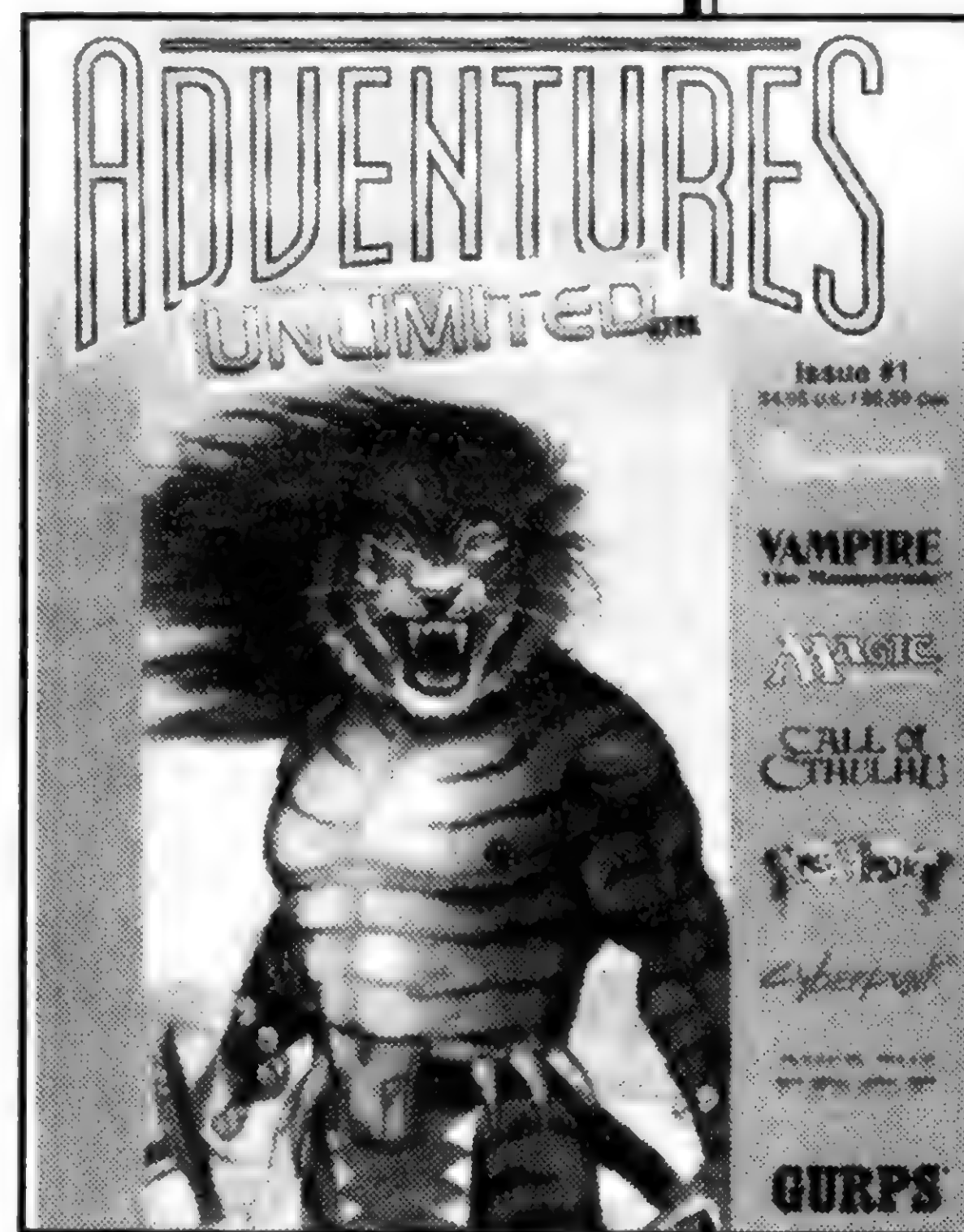
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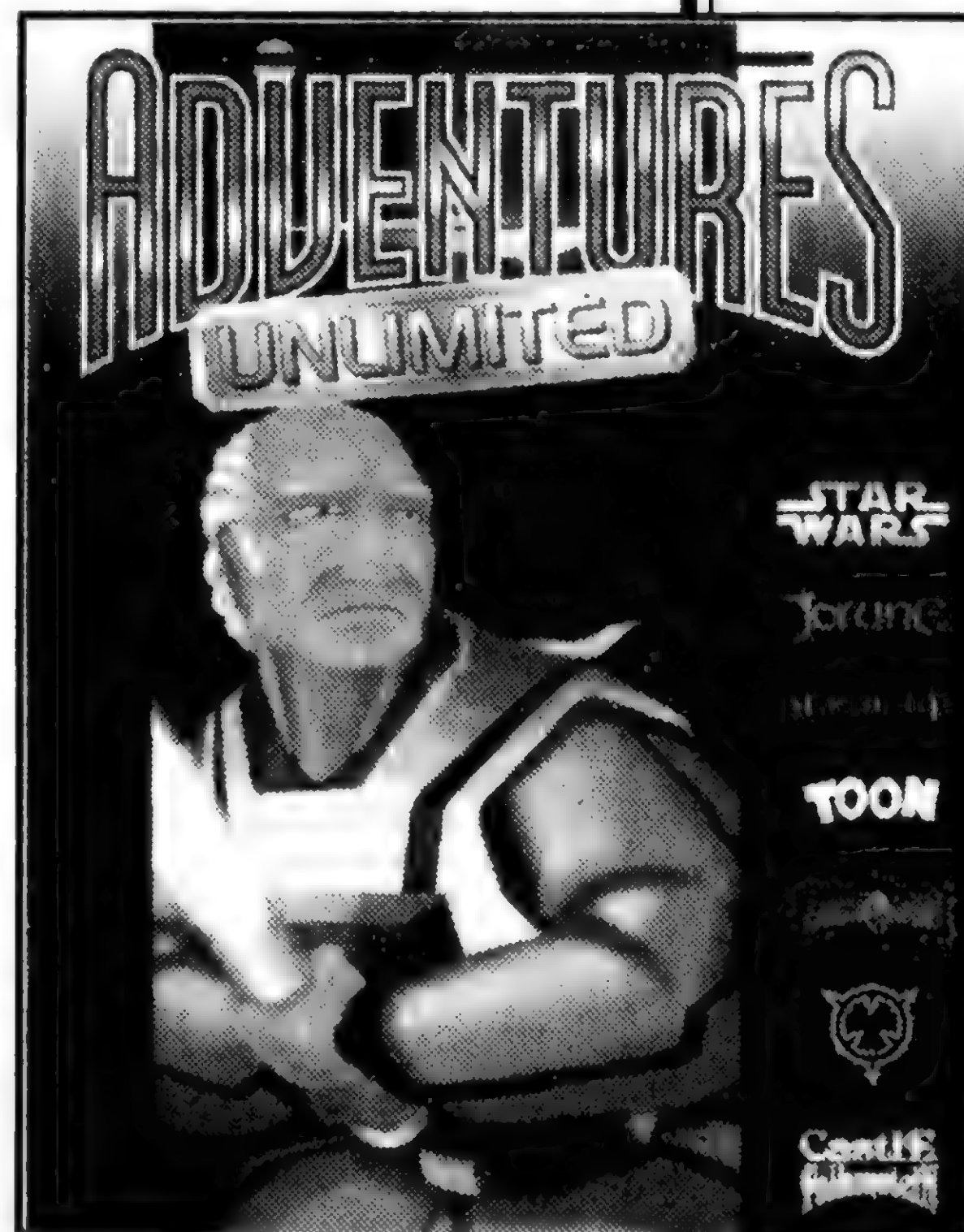
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Spirits of the Forest

BY ANDREW J. LUCAS



Spirits of the Forest is an adventure designed for the Street Fighter™ roleplaying game, and is set in Japan. The adventure requires the Street Fighter RPG as well as the *Street Fighter Player's Guide* (since the Ninja fighting style figures prominently in the story). If the Storyteller does not have access to the *Player's Guide* he or she may opt to change the fighting style of Hikaru Shoukichi to a style from the main rulebook (Kung Fu would be best). Access to the *Secrets of Shadoloo* sourcebook is also recommended but is not required to run the adventure.

The adventure is designed for a single team of fighters ranked 3-5, although it can easily be modified to accommodate two teams or a single solo fighter. *Spirits of the Forest* is written for any number of players, four to six being optimum. During the course of the adventure the players' team will be required to fight two team bouts and possibly one feature fight with one opponent from an opposing team. The adventure itself is designed to provide a little plot development; it's the sandwich meat between the bread of tournament bouts.

As Storyteller, you will need to prepare by creating two teams of combatants to challenge your players during the tournament. The *Player's Guide* and the upcoming *Contenders* book can help you. When determining which PCs will fight which NPC opponents, try to find interesting style and personality clashes. If you wish, you can let lower ranking PCs and NPCs "challenge" higher ranking

characters. Of course, your players may always wish to challenge each other.

Eyes in The Night

"Japan wasn't at all what I thought it would be like. Looking back, I'm not really sure what I actually expected to see. Heavy industry, Karaoke bars, neon skyscrapers and a lot of people smaller than me. I could see all of that back home in Seattle. What really surprised me was the simple rural beauty of the country. Back home, we think of

Japan as an industrial powerhouse, true it is, but it's also much, much more. The last few days have taught me that.

"The woods were quiet. It would be a cliché to say too quiet, but then again where I come from, if there wasn't a siren or gunshot ringing in your ears it was too quiet. My mother used to say that hearing the sounds of the city meant you were alive and part of the world. I always wondered what she meant by that – another lesson Japan taught me.

"I didn't notice when the birds stopped singing, but Jake did. Jake was ex-green beret and part Indian to boot. The Army and his time in 'Nam had taught him more about the wilderness than any other vet I've met. He warned me about the birds: when they went silent in the country, it meant there

might be an ambush ahead. Jake was full of these little pearls of wisdom. Lord knows how he got them – I sure as hell could do without knowing.

"It was about that time that we noticed the eyes in the forest.

"We'd met Ninja only once before, in Barcelona. When the eyes changed into dark-clad, hooded figures, we knew what to expect – or so we thought.

"John Henry was the first to attack, rushing straight at the Ninja. The sight of the huge sanbo specialist scares the bejesus



out of me, but this little Ninja stood his ground looking almost bored by the big man's bellowing. The rest of us prepared to follow up John's lead, confident that one little Ninja wouldn't be a threat. Then the ground opened up and swallowed John Henry.

"Suddenly Ninja were all over us. I could see Icepick blindly stumbling into the woods with two of the devils hard on his heels. Jake was down, clutching a bloody head wound, and behind me I could hear Kiersten screaming. Then everything went dark.

There are some things in this world that we are better off not knowing – another lesson Japan taught me."

Nick Fontana, interviewed by Circuit Watch magazine

The Story

The players are invited to a tournament being held at a resort in Japan. The contestants do not realize it, but the tournament (and the Shadoloo plot to destroy the Ninja village) has been instigated by the Ninja Yuki Takada as a test. She wishes to see if Hikaru Shoukichi is worthy of founding a Ninja clan with her.

Yuki has been spying on the activities of Hikaru and his village and is impressed with what she has seen. To see if Hikaru is truly worthy of her, she is holding a Street Fighting tournament at her *ryokan*, knowing full well that Shadoloo will use the tournament as a smokescreen to launch some plot to destroy Hikaru. If the plot succeeds then Hikaru was never worthy of Yuki's interest. If it fails, she will make her intentions known to Hikaru.

The tournament runs for three days. Over the course of the event a rivalry can be observed between the two highest ranked opponents – a Western Kickboxer named Thomas Wiesma, and Hikaru Shoukichi, a Ninja suspected to be working for Shadoloo. There is no love lost between the two opponents and the combat threatens to engulf the resort where the tournament is being held.

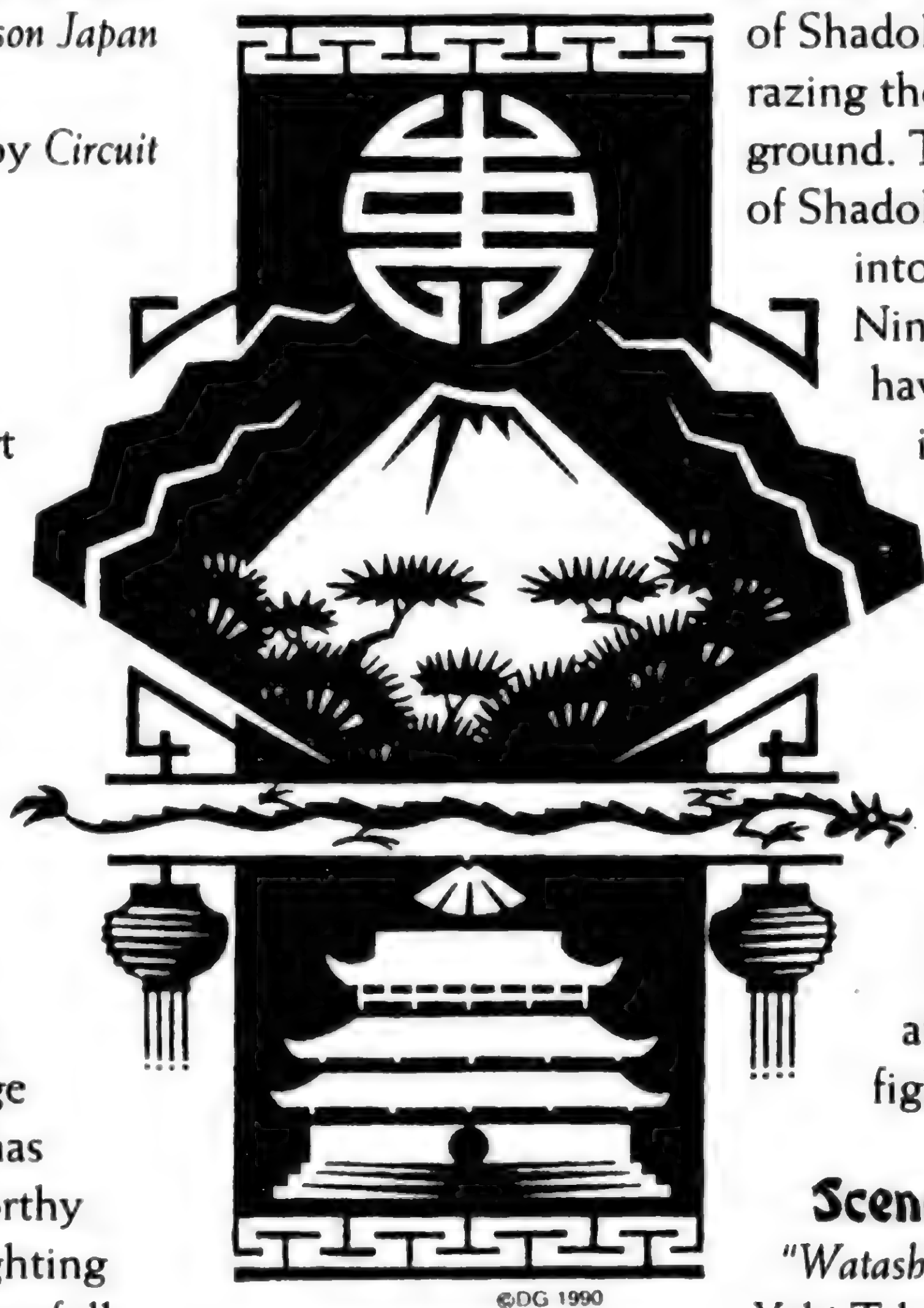
On the second day of the tournament, Thomas approaches the group with a plea for help. He tells them that Hikaru has taken his sister hostage in an attempt to force him out of the tournament. Thomas appeals to the group to help him. He knows the location of the village where she is being held and asks the team to retrieve her while he faces Shoukichi in the ring. Thomas must fight and cannot accompany the group; his hometown has gambled

- heavily on the outcome of the tourney.
- If the group leaves that night they can be back in time participate in the final rounds and to watch the final bout between Thomas and Hikaru.

- The village is the home of Hikaru's Ninja clan, but it has not taken Thomas' sister hostage. Its inhabitants will defend their home from the team but know nothing of the lies Thomas has spread about their village or his sister.

- The sister is indeed at the village – not as a prisoner but as the leader of a crack force of Shadoloo troops who are intent on razing the peaceful community to the ground. The sister and Thomas are pawns of Shadoloo, who have duped the team into softening up the defenses of the Ninja village for them. Once they have destroyed this particular thorn in M. Bison's side, Thomas plans to beat Hikaru in the ring by using poison.

Can the team survive the assault on the Ninja stronghold and return to the tournament in time to save Hikaru? Will Hikaru prove strong enough to (unintentionally) win the affections of Yuki Takada? Will the fighters survive to care?



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Scene 1: The Tournament

"*Watashi wa Takada Yuki-san.* My name is Yuki Takada."

- The characters have been invited to participate in a Street Fighter tournament held at a traditional Japanese inn (called a *ryokan*) in Takayama. It is expected that all fighters will stay at the *ryokan* and partake of its hospitality. Yuki will be there in her guise of the *ryokan*'s hostess. She is very demure and speaks little. She is seen only rarely and always in a formal kimono.

- Yuki knows everything that happens in the *ryokan* and uses her Ninja abilities to spy on all of her guests. No one is aware that she is a Ninja. Yuki's true reasons for holding the tournament are to test the abilities of Hikaru Shoukichi (see above).

- Yuki's statistics can be found on page 19-20 of the *Player's Guide*. It is unlikely that you will need them for this adventure, however, since she will probably not enter combat.

- Over the first day of the tournament, a number of bouts are fought. The players should have the opportunity to fight at least one team and one single fight. As Storyteller, you will have to develop

opponents for the players. This could be a good opportunity to enhance old rivalries with fighters the players have previously encountered.

During the tournament, the PCs are sure to notice the rivalry between the Kickboxer Thomas Weisma and the Ninja Hikaru Shoukichi. They overhear rumors that the Ninja will stop at nothing to finish Thomas' career.

If the players ask what the basis of the feud is, they will not find any relevant information – only speculation (Thomas is a better fighter and the Ninja is scared, etc.). Neither Hikaru nor

- Thomas will discuss the rivalry, but Thomas' sister is quite willing to talk. In fact Katherine Weisma is as friendly as her brother is sullen.
- Katherine speaks Japanese fluently and will take the players' team under her wing and show them the sights of the town. Katherine is pleasant company and gives every impression of being the players' best friend. She spends the night entertaining the Street Fighters while her brother practices for his fights. If asked about Thomas, she is polite but appears very bored by the conversation and soon changes the subject.

Shoukichi-Ryu Ninja Genin

The Genin are the mainstay of the village defenses. These warriors are composed of the young men and women of the village who rally under the command of the Chunin to fight off invaders.

Strength ••	Charisma ••
Perception •••	Dexterity •••
Manipulation ••	Intelligence ••
Stamina •••	Appearance ••
Wits •••	

Alertness ••	Blind Fighting •
Insight •	Intimidation ••
Mysteries •	Security ••
Stealth •••	Style Lore •
Subterfuge •	

Maneuvers & Powers (Speed / Damage / Move)

Punch: Jab 5 / 3 / 2
Punch: Strong 3 / 5 / 2
Punch: Fierce 2 / 7 / 1
Kick: Short 4 / 4 / 2
Kick: Forward 3 / 6 / 1
Kick: Roundhouse 1 / 8 / 1
Grab 3 / 3 / 1
Block 7 / (+1 soak) / 0
Movement 6 / 0 / 5
Handstand Kick 2 / 8 / 0
Jump 6 / 0 / 2
Slide Kick 2 / 7 / 3

Chi •••	Willpower ••
Health ••••••••	

Weapons (Speed / Damage / Move)
Shuriken 6 / 5 / 2

Noisy Neighbors

The second day proceeds very much like the first, with many teams and individuals fighting in the courtyard of the *ryokan*. Thomas and the Ninja exchange hate-filled glances, while Katherine cheers the players' team to victory (or consoles their defeat). As night falls, the players hear an anguished cry from Katherine's room in the *ryokan*.

Within Katherine's room are Yuki (dressed as always in an elegant kimono) and Thomas. Thomas is clutching a blood-stained skirt and looks furious. He explains that he and Katherine were going to meet for dinner. She was late, and when he became worried and went to look for her this is what he found in her room. Yuki shows the players a letter written in Japanese kanji script. She translates: "Your sister is mine. Tomorrow you will lose your match with me... or you will lose much more." The letter was tacked to the wall by a shuriken.

Thomas informs everyone that he knows that this is a trap and that he is expected to take the bait and try to rescue his sister, thus missing (and forfeiting) the fight. Unfortunately his entire hometown has wagered heavily on him. If he loses – even by default – there will be much hardship back in the States.

Yuki suggests that the PCs could go in his stead. "Surely the Ninja are only expecting one fighter. Many may be enough to triumph. If you leave now, you could be there, rescue Katherine and be back for your own fights."

As Storyteller, you may be forced to improvise to entice the players to take the rescue mission.

Scene II: The Ninja Village

The players should seek to rescue the seemingly helpless Katherine from the "evil" clutches of the Shoukichi clan. Getting to the village is an adventure in itself. While the players will be able to get transportation (bus or taxi to the base of the mountain) they will be unable to convince any locals to take them directly to the village. The local people are deathly afraid of the *oni* (demon spirits) that live

in the forest and dance on the slope of the mountain.

None of the residents of Takayama or other local towns will set foot on the mountain. They will not rent, lend, or sell any transportation to the fighters to aid in their mission, for fear of angering the *oni*. They believe the *oni* will wreak a terrible vengeance upon anyone who helps *gaijin* (foreigners) invade their peace.

Warning: Potholes Ahead

In the unlikely (and unfortunate) event that the players secure land transport, they will encounter the many varied and deadly traps and pitfalls that the Ninja have established around their village. You should describe the huge gaping pit the players drive over – seconds before they hit the bottom.

Alternatively, the players will spring a trip line which swings a huge hardwood log with a sharpened tip straight into their vehicle's engine block. The fighters will escape injury, but their vehicle will be totaled.

Fourth of July

If the Street Fighters have access to Resources or Backing and decide to charter an airplane or helicopter to take them directly to the village, they will find the Ninjas prepared. Shadoloo have tried to assault the village before, using a modified C-130 cargo plane that was heavily outfitted with weapons smuggled into Japan. They expected to eradicate the village within a few minutes. What they didn't expect were the stinger missiles the resourceful Ninja had obtained from Afghani resistance fighters.

The Ninja clan may value the ancient ways, but they know the worth of a good surface-to-air missile. The Shadoloo plane was lost, along with a sizable investment of Bison's funds. Bison has sworn revenge, but is unwilling to lose even more troops and weapons; hence the plot to use the Street Fighters to soften up the village for Shadoloo's assault troops.

Stinger missile

Speed: -4

Damage: 10 to any occupants of the vehicle. The aircraft will burst into flames and crash in the forest 3-4 miles away from the Ninja village. Proceed with the rest of the scene.

If You Go Into the Woods Today

The players will probably be forced to trek through the woods on foot – which will not do much for their disposition. Shadoloo is counting on the fact that they will spring all the Ninja traps along the way – and they probably will. The Storyteller should decide how many traps the PCs will face, taking into account adventure pacing and how damaged she wants the PCs to be once they get to the village.

Shoukichi-Ryu Ninja Chunin

Chunin serve double duty in the Shoukichi village, not only as teachers and priests, but also as elite warriors. The headdress of the Chunin is a little more elaborate than the simple Genin's mask. *oni* (demon) face masks hide the identities of all Shoukichi-ryu Ninja, and the fearsomeness of the mask's visage denotes the proficiency of its wearer. Truly, the Chunin wear the most frightening attire of the clan, second only to the mask of their Jonin guardian Hikaru Shoukichi.

Strength ●●●

Perception ●●●

Manipulation ●●●

Stamina ●●●

Wits ●●●

Charisma ●●

Dexterity ●●●●

Intelligence ●●●

Appearance ●●

Alertness ●●●

Insight ●●

Mysteries ●●●

Stealth ●●●●●

Subterfuge ●●

Blind Fighting ●●

Intimidation ●●●

Security ●●

Style Lore ●●

Maneuvers & Powers (Speed / Damage / Move)

Punch: Jab 6 / 4 / 3

Punch: Strong 4 / 6 / 3

Punch: Fierce 3 / 8 / 2

Kick: Short 5 / 5 / 3

Kick: Forward 4 / 7 / 2

Kick: Roundhouse 2 / 9 / 2

Grab 4 / 5 / 1

Block 8 / (+2 soak) / 0

Movement 7 / 0 / 6

Backflip Kick 4 / 7 / 2

Heel Stomp 6 / 1 / 4

Jump 7 / 0 / 3

Shrouded Moon 3 / 0 / 2

Slide Kick 3 / 8 / 4

Wall Spring 6 / 3 / 5

Chi ●●●

Health ●●●●●●●●

Willpower ●●

Weapons (Speed / Damage / Move)

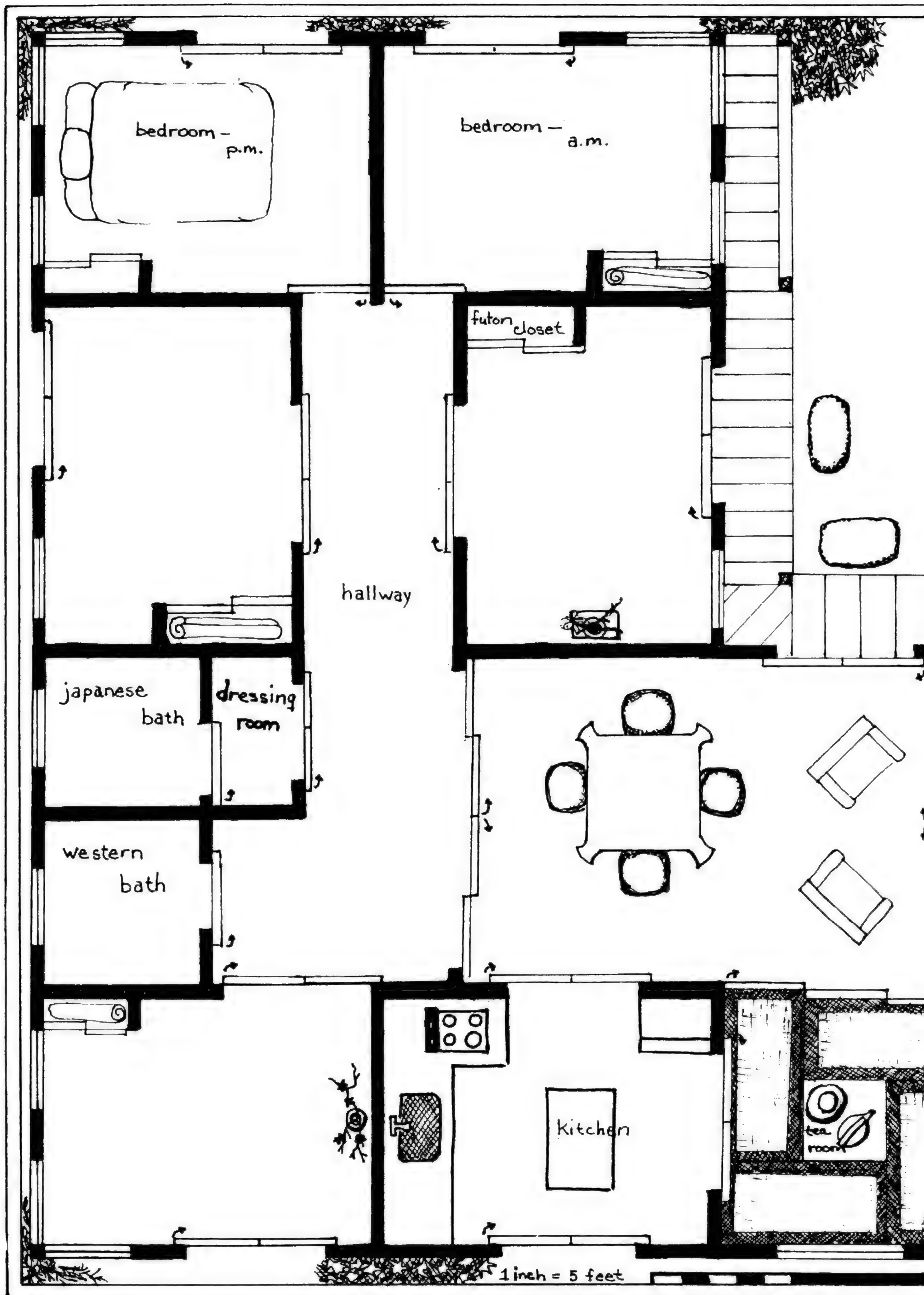
Shuriken 6 / 5 / 2

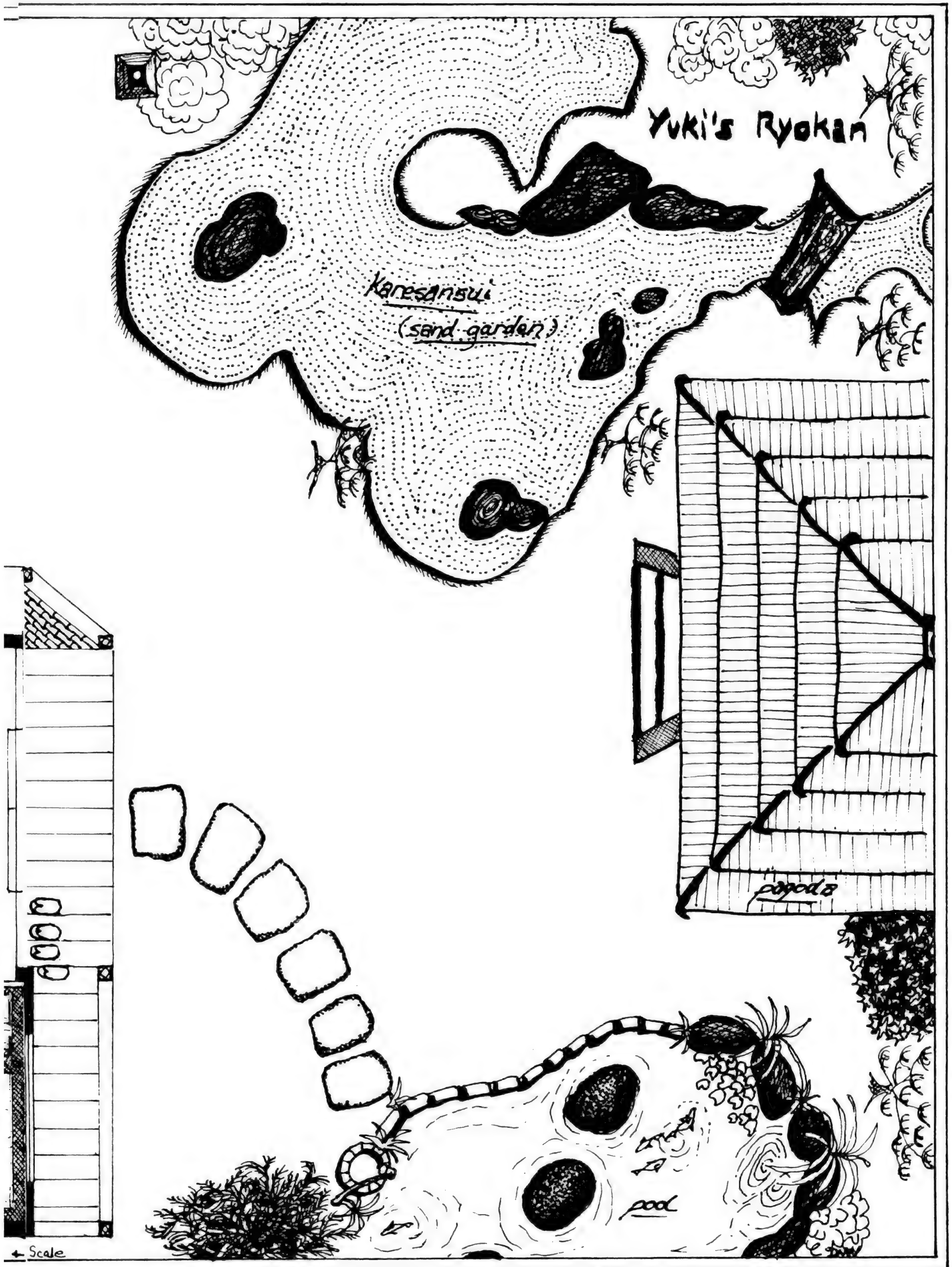
Shikan-Ken 5 / 7 / 0

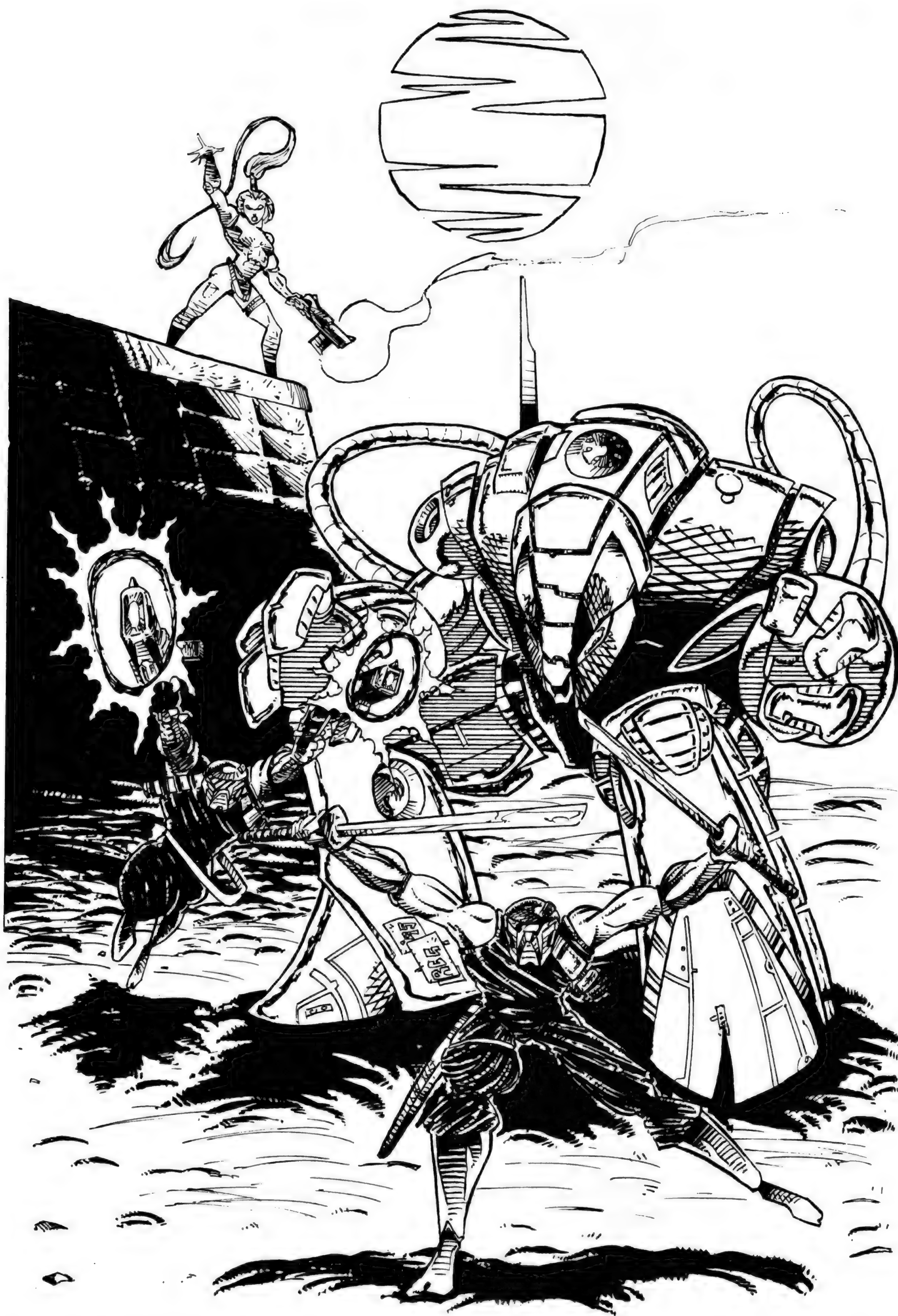
Ninja-to Jab 8 / 6 / 3

Ninja-to Strong 6 / 8 / 3

Ninja-to Fierce 5 / 10 / 2







Allow each of the players a Perception + Survival roll to avoid the booby traps. The difficulty is 6 and two successes will allow the fighters to sidestep any trap. Any fighter who fails this roll will spring a booby trap. Possible traps include:

Net: Dexterity + Athletics test to avoid; Strength test to break free.

Arrow: Speed 6; Damage 6.

Pit: Athletics test to avoid falling in; Damage 10.

Log: Athletics + Dexterity to avoid swinging log (anti-vehicle trap); Damage 14.

Snare: Dexterity + Athletics to avoid being suspended upside down; Damage 2.

Caltrops: Perception to spot these pointed spikes on the forest floor; Damage 3.

(The target number for all tests is 7.)

Eventually the fighters reach the Ninja village, where the Shoukichi clan has marshaled all of its forces to fight the invaders. There will be one Genin for each fighter and one Chunin for every two fighters (round up). The Chunin begin combat with a fast Heel Stomp, allowing the Genin to hit their target with a Slide Kick. At least one Genin hangs back, throwing shuriken.

Allow the combat to proceed as normal. It is highly unlikely that the players will lose, but if it appears that they will, advance to the next scene.

Ninja-to

The Ninja's short straight sword is smaller than the samurai katana and can be fairly easily concealed. This sword is a fast weapon that allows Ninja to strike first in most armed conflicts.

Base Technique: Sword: +2 Speed; +2 Damage; +0 Move.

Assault Robot Mk-III

The assault robot Mk-III is a recent development of Shadoloo's Mrigankan laboratories. The robot is designed for front-line combat and packs enough firepower to deal with most threats, be they armored units, hardened emplacements, or simple infantry battalions.

The head of the robot contains an elaborate sensor suite, which combines motion-sensitive target acquisition hardware with sonar and infrared detection scanners. The sensors are mounted upon two titanium posts welded to the upper torso. These are separated by a three-foot span, giving the robot excellent binocular vision and allowing its main armament to swivel over the robot's torso and lock into place as part of the head unit. Once this action is complete the robot may turn its head and fire at any target it can see.

An armored back unit contains the unit's main armament, which consists of a powerful gattling cannon. The huge back of the robot has a distinctive hunchbacked appearance, intended to inspire fear in enemy troops. The cannon contains enough ammunition to last indefinitely, but the unit's rate of fire is limited by the energy required to run the cannon. Its batteries (chi) hold only enough power to fire the gattling cannon 4 times. If the robot stands idle (effectively dizzied) it may recharge one point of energy (chi).

Strength ●●●
Dexterity ●●●
Stamina ●●●●●

Charisma ●
Manipulation ●
Appearance ●

Perception ●●●
Intelligence ●
Wits ●●●

Alertness ●●●
Intimidation ●

Security ●
Stealth ●●●

Computer ●●

Maneuvers & Powers (Speed / Damage / Move)

Punch: Jab 5 / 5 / 2

Punch: Strong 3 / 7 / 2

Punch: Fierce 2 / 9 / 1

Kick: Short 4 / 6 / 2

Kick: Forward 3 / 8 / 1

Kick: Roundhouse 1 / 10 / 1

Block 0 / 0 / 0

Grab 3 / 5 / 1

Movement 7 / 0 / 7

Chi ●●●●

Willpower ●●●

Health ●●●●●●●●●●

Weapons (Speed / Damage / Move)

Gattling Cannon 4 / 14 / 0

Scene III: Surprise Attack

Just as victory seems assured (either for the Street Fighters or the Ninja) Shadoloo makes an appearance. A barrage of cannon fire targets any remaining Ninja, knocking them unconscious. Katherine, garbed in combat gear, strides into the village followed by Shadoloo elite assault troops. (There should be one assault squad per two Street Fighters, rounded down.)

Katherine sarcastically addresses the fighters: "Thank you for softening up the village for us. My Shadoloo troops will finish what you have started. Now kindly step aside before you get hurt."

Presumably the fighters will decide to protect the village once they realize that they have been used as patsies by Bison's operatives. If they actually do step aside (unless this is just a ruse) feel free to remove 1 permanent Honor

If they do not step aside, Katherine will continue: "Ah, so the fools think they can challenge the power of Shadoloo do they?" She waves her hand nonchalantly in the team's direction. "Kill them and burn the village to the ground."

Let chaos reign. The troopers prefer to use their blaster rifles to pin down the Street Fighters while the robots advance on them. In hand-to-hand combat the troopers try to tie up the Street Fighters while the robots fire gattling cannons at them. Katherine does not enter combat unless it becomes obvious that Shadoloo is losing.

If the players are being beaten very badly, Yuki Takada enters the fray in Ninja guise to even up the sides. She has been watching the proceedings to see if Hikaru's clan is worthy of her attentions.

Shadoloo Assault Squad

These elite troops operate in teams of three – two troopers and one assault robot. The troopers act as fire support for the robot, which will advance upon an enemy position, shrugging off most forms of attack. The troopers can designate the robot's target or allow its sophisticated AI program to choose a target independently.

The assault squads are a new addition to Shadoloo's armed forces, and utilize new weapons

- created in M. Bison's science labs. Bison is using this attack as a test for the new squads as well as an opportunity to destroy an obstinate Ninja clan.

Assault Troopers

- For the assault troopers, use the Lifer Soldier statistics from page 174 of the *Street Fighter* rules book.
- The troopers wear camouflage fatigues and combat helmets. The helmets contain advanced sensors that allow the troopers to detect hidden opponents using sonar and infrared sensors. (These will eliminate the Ninja Shrouded Moon ability and will reveal concealed ambushes.) The sensors also make the troopers susceptible to being blinded by fireballs and like attacks. Any trooper successfully

struck by a flame attack – be it a Fireball, Flaming Fist or any similar attack – is automatically dizzied as the helmet's electronics overload. Sonic attacks like Stunning Shout will also overload the helmets. (The Assault Robot is not affected in this way.)

In addition to the Sensor helmet, the troopers also carry the following weapons:

- Blaster Rifle: +1 Speed, +6 Damage.
- Knife: +2 Speed, +1 Damage, +0 Move.



Scene IV: Aftermath

- Once the threat to the Ninja village is over, the players can return to the tournament for the final day's bouts. They may wish to confront Thomas with his sister's defeat or simply let him wonder. In any event Thomas' parting words will be, "You have made no friends this day. Rest assured that you will rue the day you ever met me."

- If the players try to talk to Hikaru they will notice him engrossed in conversation with the Ninja, Yuki Takada. The two embrace briefly, then Yuki disappears into the shadows.

- Hikaru will thank the players in his brusque manner and pledge the support of his clan should they ever require it. Any Ninjas in the group are also welcome to study with the Shoukichi clan.

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Thomas Weisma (Shadoloo Agent)

Thomas is a large man whose face bears the marks on many battles. To those around him, he seems very likable, if a little reserved. Very few people realize that Thomas and his sister are Shadoloo operatives. No one knows where Thomas and Katherine come from – although they do have a distinct American accent. He is an exceptional all-around fighter but occasionally lets over-confidence get the best of him.

Appearance: Thomas is a large, heavy set man with piercing blue eyes and wild black hair. He usually wears a brown leather jacket with the American flag on the back and the loose trousers common to his fighting style.

Quote: "Look, we can do this two ways. My way – or my way with you picking up your teeth up off the floor."

Style: Western Kickboxing.

School: Unknown

Signature: shakes fist at opponent and yells.

Strength ●●●●	Charisma ●●●●	Perception ●●●
Dexterity ●●●	Manipulation ●●	Intelligence ●●
Stamina ●●●●	Appearance ●●	Wits ●●●
Alertness ●●	Blind Fighting ●●	Arena ●●●
Interrogation ●	Drive ●●●●	Computer ●
Intimidation ●●●●	Leadership ●●	Investigation ●●●
Insight ●	Security ●	Medicine ●●
Streetwise ●●●●	Stealth ●●	Mysteries ●
Subterfuge ●●●	Survival ●●●	Style Lore ●●
Allies (Shadaloo) ●●●		Punch ●●●●●
Backing ●●		Kick ●●●●
Fame ●●		Block ●●●
Resources ●		Grab ●●●
		Athletics ●●
Glory ●●●●		Focus ●●
Honor ●●		
Willpower ●●●●●●		Chi ●●
Health ●●●●●●●●●●●●		

Special Maneuvers: Jump; Throw; Spinning Backfist; Spinning Knuckle; Double-hit Kick; Double Dread Kick; Stepping Front Kick; Wounded Knee; Backroll Throw; Punch Defense; Deflecting Punch.

Combos: Deflecting Punch to Wounded Knee to Double Dread Kick (Dizzy); Jab Block to Fierce (Dizzy).

Division: Freestyle. *Rank:* 6

Standing : Wins 20; Losses 5; Draws 2; KO's 12.

Katherine Weisma (Shadoloo Agent)

Katherine is a petite woman with flowing blond hair. It is not commonly known that she is a well trained and experienced Wu Shu fighter – a fact she like to keep to herself. On the surface she is bubbly and energetic, but below that is a driving thirst for power that only service to Shadoloo can quench.

Appearance: Katherine is fond of wearing leather mini-skirts – not so much because it frees her legs for fast powerful kicks, but because it distracts her opponents, allowing those kicks to land.

Quote: "You must be a very good fighter to still look so handsome (giggle)."

Style: Wu Shu.

School: Unknown.

Signature: does a backflip and straightens her skirt.

Strength ●●	Charisma ●●●	Perception ●●●
Dexterity ●●●●●	Manip. ●●●●●	Intelligence ●●●
Stamina ●●●	Appearance ●●●●	Wits ●●●
Alertness ●●	Blind Fighting ●●	Arena ●●●
Interrogation ●●	Drive ●	Computer ●●●
Intimidation ●	Leadership ●●	Investigation ●●
Insight ●●●	Security ●●●●	Medicine ●●
Streetwise ●●●	Stealth ●●	Mysteries ●●
Subterfuge ●●●●●	Survival ●●	Style Lore ●●
Allies (Shadaloo) ●●●		Punch ●
Contacts ●●●		Kick ●●●
Resources ●●		Block ●●
		Grab ●●
Glory ●		Athletics ●●●●
Honor ●		Focus ●
Willpower ●●●●●		Chi ●●●●
Health ●●●●●●●●●●		

Special Maneuvers: Jump; Backflip Kick; Double-hit Kick; Lightning Leg; Flying Heel Stomp; Kippup; Wall Spring.

Combos: Flying Heel Stomp to Block to Backflip Kick (Dizzy).

Division: Freestyle. *Rank:* 4

Standing: Wins 12; Losses 3; Draws 2; KO's 10.

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Hikaru Shoukichi, Ninja Streetfighter

Hikaru Shoukichi is the guardian of the Mikkyo shine of the village. He is the only Jonin of the village and takes his responsibilities very seriously. Under his command the Genin and Chunin of the village have successfully thwarted M. Bison's attempts to subvert or destroy their heritage.

When Hikaru heard of the Street Fighter circuit, he decided to join to better keep an eye on the activities of Bison's pawns. He is worried about the Takayama tournament being held so close to his village and believes it is being used to mask Bison's massing of troops to finally destroy his village. He is completely unaware that the tournament is being held for his benefit by Yuki Takada to test his worthiness.

Appearance: Hikaru's true appearance is unknown as he has only been seen in his fighting garb. The Jonin-ranked Ninja wears loose baggy pants, a black *gi* and *tabi* shoes. In place of the traditional Ninja hood, Hikaru wears a fearsome *oni* (demon) mask. In the Shoukichi-Ryu Hikaru represents, all Ninja wear such masks. As a warrior advances in rank the masks become more horrible in aspect, to reflect the skill. Hikaru's mask is truly as terrifying as his skill in the ring.

Quote: "The world is a dangerous place, *Gaijin*. Remove yourself from my path before I show you how dangerous."

Style: Ninjitsu.

School: Shoukichi dojo.

Stable: none.

Signature: scatters cherry blossoms onto a fallen opponent.

Strength ●●●	Charisma ●●	Perception ●●●
Dexterity ●●●●	Manip. ●●●●	Intelligence ●●
Stamina ●●●●	Appearance ●●	Wits ●●●

Alertness ●●	Blind Fighting ●●	Arena ●●
Interrogation ●	Drive ●	Computer ●
Intimidation ●●	Leadership ●●●	Investigation ●
Insight ●●	Security ●●●●	Medicine ●●●
Streetwise ●●	Stealth ●●●●●	Mysteries ●●
Subterfuge ●●●	Survival ●●	Style Lore ●●●

Allies (Clan) ●●●●
Clan Heritage ●●●●●
Disguise ●●●

Glory ●●●●●●●
Honor ●●●●

Chi ●●●	Willpower ●●●●●●
Health ●●●●●●●●●●	

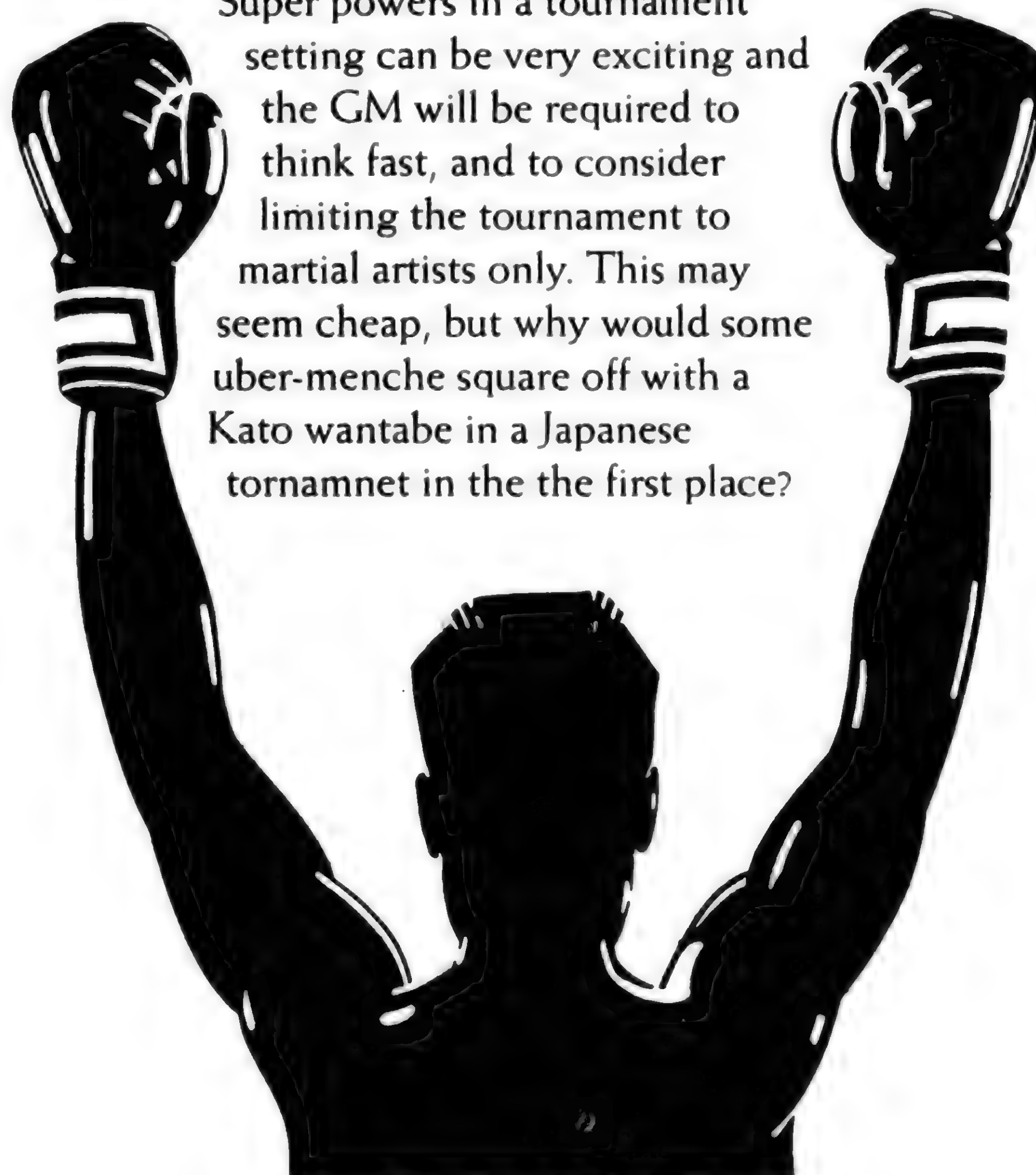
Punch ●●●
Kick ●●●●●
Block ●●●
Grab ●●
Athletics ●●●
Focus ●●

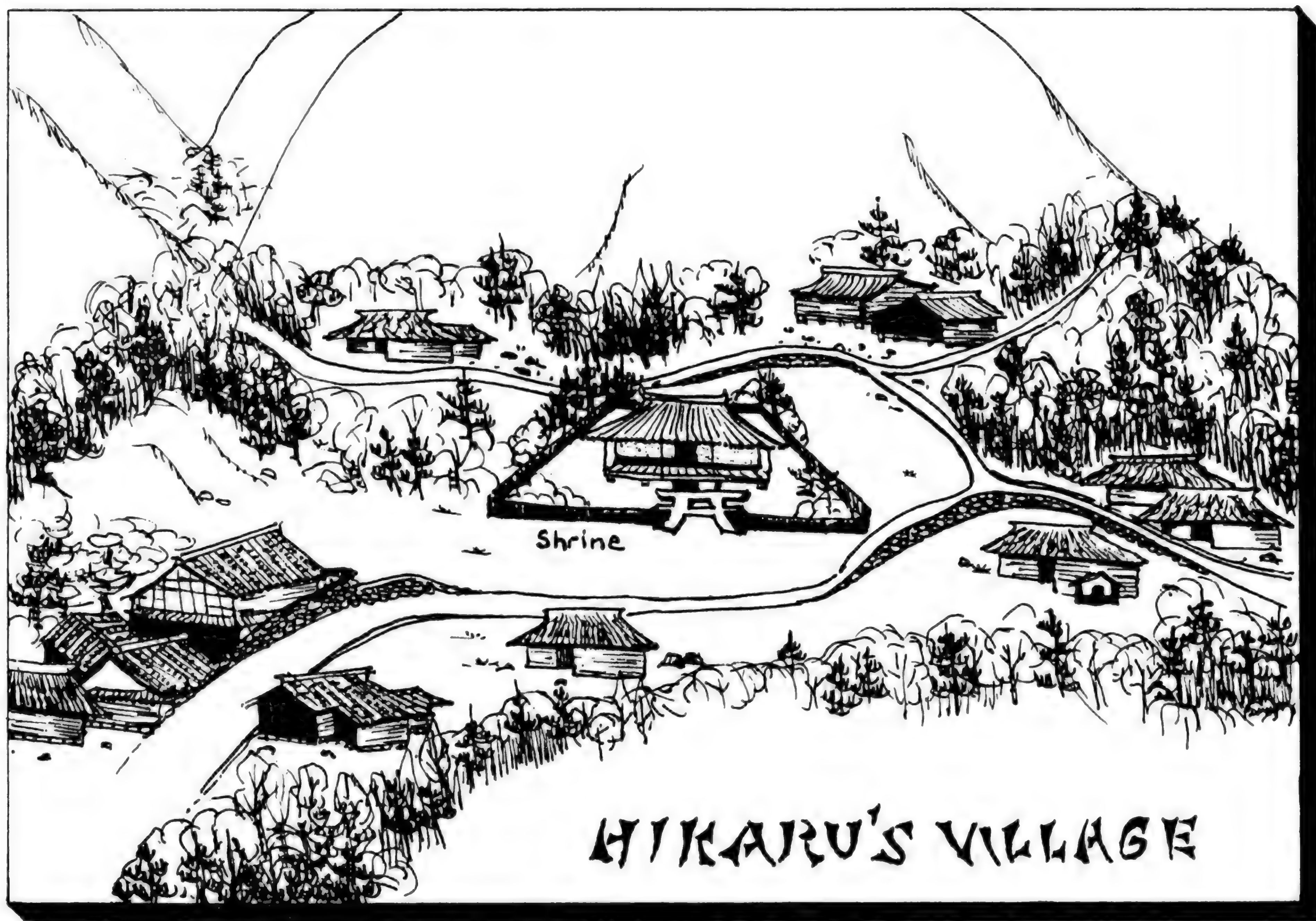
- **Special Maneuvers:** Jump; Wall Spring; Shikan-ken;
- Shuto; Slide Kick; Backflip Kick; Cartwheel kick; Heel Stomp; Shrouded Moon; Entrancing Cobra.
- **Combos:** Block to Shuto to Slide Kick to Roundhouse Kick (Dizzy).
- **Division:** Freestyle.
- **Rank:** 6
- **Standing:** Wins 26; Losses 0; Draws 2; KO's 20.

CONVERSION NOTES

- Street Fighter adventures can be easily converted into a number of systems. Any campaign that revolves around a team can easily be adapted to accomodate this adventure. Campaigns can feature the tournament setting of the Takayama open tournament. Interesting games to set this adventure in would be Champions, Underground or the classic Villians & Vigilantes.
- Street Fighter is essetially a super hero campaign, but by adapting the system to a true super heroic system you can greatly enhance the flavor of a campaign. Single and team events will be radically changed with the addition of true super powers, and the knockback rules of V&V will certainly enhance the use of the combat arenas.
- If the characters have access to flying powers it will be nessacary to ground them, perhaps by intensifying the surface-to-air support the Ninja clan has access to. A few more SAMs and a couple of Phalanx gattling cannons should dissuade even the most aggressive flyer.
- Super powers may have to be given to the NPCs to counter any that the players may have.

Super powers in a tournament setting can be very exciting and the GM will be required to think fast, and to consider limiting the tournament to martial artists only. This may seem cheap, but why would some uber-menche square off with a Kato wantabe in a Japanese tornamnet in the the first place?





Uber-man versus the shadow lord, however, would be appropriate. Perhaps the prize could be some mystically powered artifact.

The point is that, to involve major super heroes, the scale has to be grander than a simple street fight. Remember, when using super heroes bigger is always better!



Andrew Lucas

Andrew began his career writing poetry and short stories for his own enjoyment. He soon realized that women were more impressed by a large – paycheck – than carefully crafted prose, and sold out to the B.C. Telephone company.

Andrew exhibited great artistic skill by disrupting his friends' gaming sessions with truly talented puns. Realizing his true calling at last, he decided to take his skills to the source – the game publishers. Imagine the naive boy's surprise when he was actually paid, simply for using his God-given talent.

Andrew is the author of the *Street Fighter Player's Guide*. His work has also appeared in *Challenge Magazine* and *White Wolf Magazine*, and he has done

- design work for FASA, White Wolf, Legacy, and
- Pariah Press. His future aspirations include
- developing real talent and morals.



R. Crowle Gray

- Ross was born in Edmonton, spent time in the
- Northwest Territories, and finally settled in
- Vancouver. He is a self-taught artist and fan of the
- original *Star Trek* television series. His work appears
- regularly in the fanzine *Skylarking Digest*. He is also
- an avid gamer, and enjoys both *Cyberpunk* and *AD&D*.



Dana Noah

- Originally from Nova Scotia, Dana is a self-
- taught artist. She works primarily with an exacto
- knife, creating greeting cards using an Asian form of
- silhouette paper cutting. Pen and ink (and
- mapmaking) is a new medium for her. Trained as a
- nurse, Dana worked in that profession for a number
- of years, and also spent some time on her
- grandmother's sheep farm in the Hebrides of
- Scotland. She came to Vancouver two years ago.

How to Hook 'em

BY LISA SMEDMAN AND MARK FREIN



very adventure starts with a "hook" – a plot device designed to whet the players' interest and start the action rolling. But sometimes, the hook just doesn't work. For example...

GAME MASTER: A wizard is offering a reward of one thousand gold coins to any hero brave enough to gather dragon scales from a nearby cave.

PLAYERS: We ignore it. That's not enough money to risk getting toasted by a dragon. (pause) Will the wizard offer us five thousand gold coins each?

GAME MASTER: The wizard reluctantly agrees.

PLAYERS: That's better, but it's still not enough money.

GAME MASTER: The wizard begs you to find the dragon scales. Without them he cannot brew the potion that will save his young daughter's life.

PLAYERS: We're not interested in slaying dragons. We lost three members of the party last time we tried it.

GAME MASTER: But the girl will die if you don't.

PLAYERS: So?

GAME MASTER: If you don't agree to go to the cave, there won't be an adventure tonight.

PLAYERS: Oh all right then. But only for ten thousand gold coins.

GAME MASTER: Each!?

What went wrong? Why didn't the players snap at the bait?

Adventure hooks can be divided into three general categories – advantageous, detrimental, and neutral. Each has a different place in adventure design.

The first of these, the advantageous hook, is the "carrot" approach. The characters are lured into the adventure with the promise of a benefit of some kind – either an item they have been searching for, a position of power or prestige they desperately crave, a piece of valuable knowledge that they need to solve a puzzle, or some other form of eagerly anticipated reward. The only way to gain this benefit is to attempt the adventure.

The second, the detrimental hook, is

the "stick" approach. It's just the reverse. If the characters do not attempt the adventure, something horrible will happen to them. They will be killed, imprisoned, cursed, see their friends eaten by aliens, be driven insane, or lose what little prestige and power they had. Perhaps they embark upon the adventure in an effort to prevent this from happening. Or perhaps the unlucky break has already happened, and the adventure offers a chance to set things right again.

The neutral hook is something that the characters can take or leave without any consequences – or at least, without any immediate, personal consequences. It typically involves a "help wanted" poster in the local tavern that is advertising for adventurers, or a plea from a local villager to save people who are strangers to the characters. If the characters don't accept, the town may be overrun with monsters. But little do they care, for they will have long since departed to another part of the campaign world.

At first glance, the neutral hook pretty much like the advantageous hook – it too offers a promise of reward. The difference lies in the fact that the reward being offered isn't something that the players were already seeking. They won't be properly motivated to search for the item being offered unless it is, quite simply, the most fabulous and irresistible item in the world.

Therein lies the key to the adventure hook: motivation.

If you're writing an adventure for your own gaming group, you should already be familiar with the wants and desires of the characters.

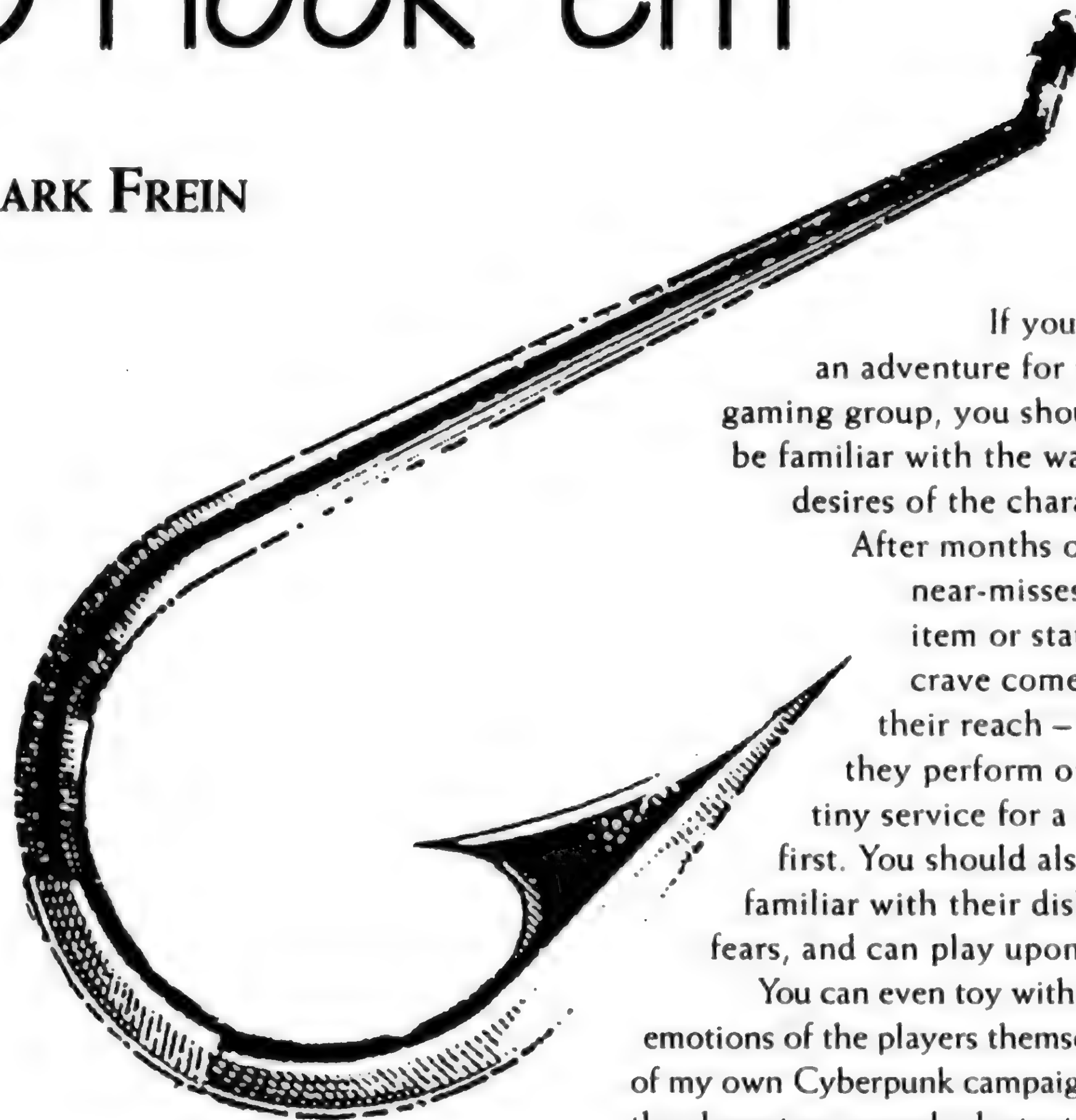
After months of hints and near-misses, at last the item or status they crave comes within their reach – but only if they perform one teeny tiny service for a wizard first. You should also be familiar with their dislikes and fears, and can play upon these.

You can even toy with the emotions of the players themselves. In one of my own Cyberpunk campaigns, when the characters proved reluctant to deliver a life-saving vaccine to a hospital, I showed them a picture of the child of a friend of ours – a little girl who was, at the time, in hospital with a serious disease. I even gave the fictional character the name of this girl, and told them that she might die if she did not get the vaccine. Instantly, the attitude of the players changed. With a real-world person whom they genuinely cared about to relate the adventure to, they were more than willing to carry it through as requested.

Using a real-world person or situation as a metaphor for an adventure isn't always practical – especially if you're writing the adventure for players you may never meet. But tapping into the emotions of the players is still critical.

In a lengthy campaign, you can do this by gradually integrating a non-player character whom the characters get to know and like – and perhaps even depend upon for their continued survival. When something nasty happens to his favored individual, you can bet that the characters will come to the rescue. Likewise, you can drop hints about where a desired item or piece of knowledge can be found, carefully building up anticipation, then gradually lead the characters to where you want them to be. By the time they realize that they're committed to an adventure, they're already half-way through it. The hook was planted so long ago that they didn't even notice it.

Here are some typical adventure hooks, and the advantages and disadvantages of each:



• **Hired Help.** The characters are hired to do a job – whether it is finding a missing person or item, guarding a valuable shipment, negotiating a treaty, or killing a monster that has been ravaging a town. The motivation may be altruism, a desire to line one's pockets, or the simple satisfaction of seeing a job well done.

Another version of this hook is the assignment. The characters take part in the adventure because they have been told to. They are soldiers, police officers, reporters, or followers of a particular wizardly covenant or vampire clan who have been given an order by a superior or charismatic leader. They must attempt the adventure – or else. Sometimes an entire campaign will be based upon this premise, with the assignment hook being used over and over again.

The advantage of this hook is that it is self-contained and thus is easy to introduce at any point in a campaign. It also clearly states the goal that the characters are to pursue. There is a definite starting and ending point, and a sense of accomplishment when the characters at last succeed in the task.

The disadvantage is that the players may refuse the adventure altogether (since it is a neutral hook) unless the reward is exorbitantly high, or may turn and run when the danger starts to outweigh the reward, thus ending the adventure prematurely.

The solution is to make the payment something that the characters will be keen to acquire. Don't just offer plain old cash – it's pretty boring, when you come right down to it. Turn this into an advantageous hook by making the reward something special that the characters are either already seeking, something that they can't get anywhere else. It may be a magical spell that can only be taught by the employer, a spell that revives a dead companion, or a piece of black-market technology that is normally unavailable at any price. Make it a limited time offer by adding a "ticking clock" to the adventure – if the characters don't complete the job in a set amount of time, the offer is revoked.

Another solution is to give the employer some sort of hold over the characters. Turn this into a detrimental hook by putting the employer in a position of power; perhaps this individual is the only one who can rescind the arrest warrant or death sentence that the

characters are under. Or perhaps the employer holds the only cure for a debilitating disease that the characters have contracted. The employer may even have deliberately infected the characters with it.

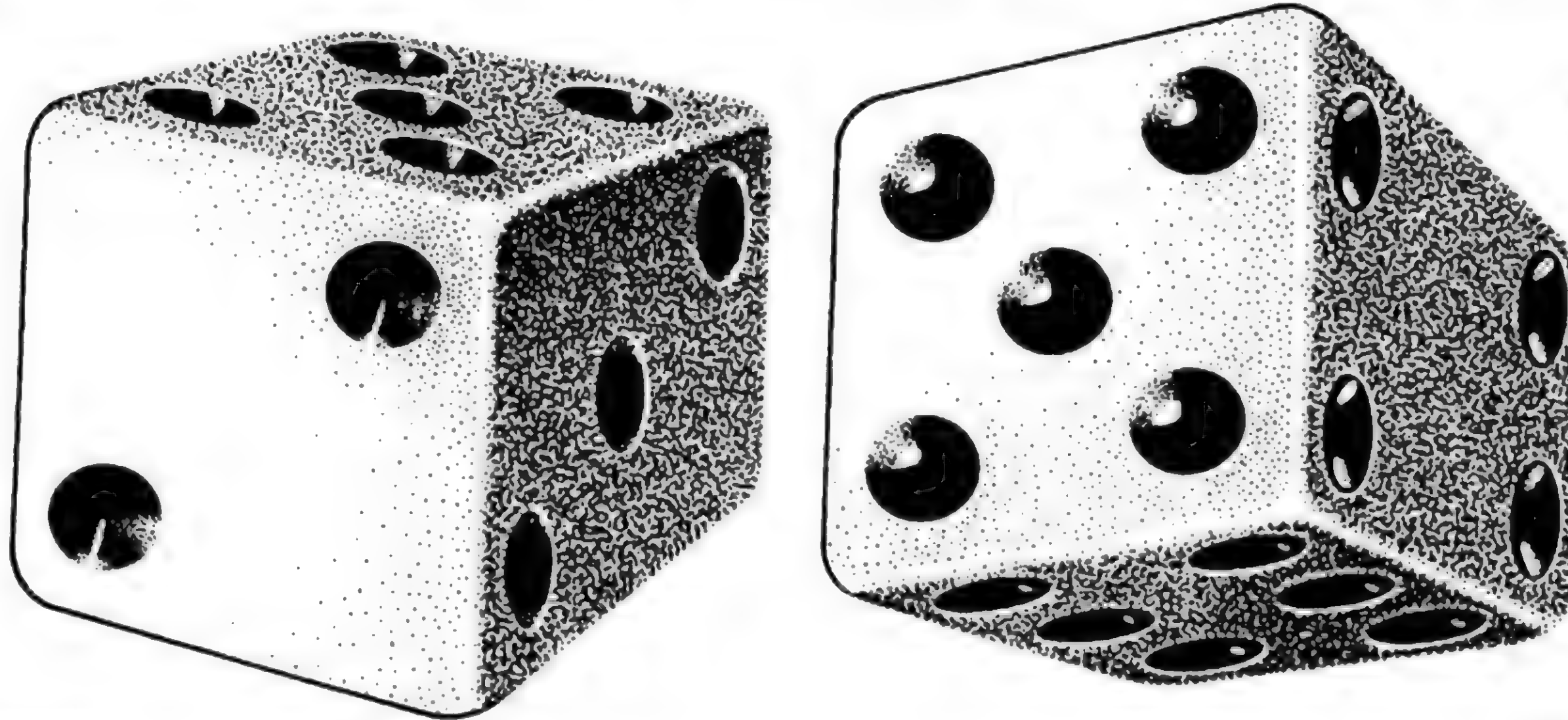
Yet another way of turning this into a detrimental hook involves making the characters "lose face" if they fail. They will no longer be respected (or hired again!) by anyone in the community, should they turn and run. They will wind up as penniless outcasts.

• **Vengeance.** The characters have been injured in some way, and are motivated by a desire for revenge. The injury may take the form of a physical attack, the destruction of prized property, a theft, or a personal insult.

The advantage of this hook is that the desire for vengeance usually results in a quick response, on the part of the characters, to the injury or insult. The

characters may not care about the victim, and may ignore the appeal.

The solution is to make the threat one that will affect the characters as well. Ignoring the appeal for help only means that they will face a greater danger later on. (You'll have to find some way to foreshadow this disaster, so that the characters are made aware of the looming threat.) Another technique is to have the appeal come from someone the characters truly care about – a close friend, valuable ally, or family member. Don't rely upon one quick mention of this non-player character to provide motivation, however – a character isn't likely to care about someone without a face or history. Build a prelude into the adventure in which this non-player character is introduced and brought to life. Give the non-player character a face, voice, and motivations of her own – and most importantly, a history in which the player characters are involved.



• **Treasure quest.** The characters hear of a fabulous treasure, ripe for the taking. Simple greed is their motivation. The source of the information might be a map, a rumor, an arcane tome, a poetic legend, a mis-directed e-mail message, a prophetic dream, or ghostly whispers from the beyond.

The advantage of this hook is that only by completing the adventure can the characters satisfy their greed. They must follow the adventure through to the end – either to the innermost chamber of the haunted tomb, or into the heart of the urban wasteland.

The disadvantage is that the item usually has to be worthy of the characters' attention. Once they have one magical crystal or plasma gun, it's tough to motivate them with the desire for another. If this hook is used too many times, the treasures need to be fabulously valuable or extremely rare for the players to bother with them. This works well in a gaming system in which magic, technology, or resources are extremely limited, but in a game where magic swords are a dime a dozen, you have to come up with something really special.

One solution is to give the treasure a legend. The item itself may not be much, in terms of game mechanics; it is its reputation that makes it so highly coveted. Perhaps it is not what the item does that is important, but the prestige it conveys. The treasure is intangible, rather than material – but is valuable, just the same.

disadvantage is that the desire for revenge can cool quickly, and may not be enough to motivate the characters throughout a longer adventure. They may simply give up if the possibility of exacting revenge seems too remote.

The solution is to sprinkle insults and injuries throughout an adventure. Each time the characters' motivation begins to flag, add a fresh goad. Gradually increase the annoyance level of the injury or insult, driving the characters' desire for vengeance up a notch each time.

• **Appeal for aid.** The characters are motivated by the desire to help someone. They may be doing this for truly altruistic reasons – or may instead be acting out of a desire to curry favor with a superior or earn a place for themselves in a society or organization. Ideally, the appeal ties in with one or more of the characters' backgrounds; a character who was abused as a child, for example, would have a strong motivation to help a child in distress.

The advantage of this hook is that it provides the characters with a clearly defined goal. The disadvantage is that the

Another solution is to make the treasure merely a starting point for yet another adventure. When the characters at last obtain it, they find that they are lacking the expertise to use it fully. Acquiring this knowledge is as difficult as acquiring the treasure itself. The characters are not cheated (the item really is valuable, or magical) but their gratification is delayed.

Alternatively, the adventure can start with the item being dropped in the characters' laps. The adventure then revolves around attempts by non-player characters to take this item from the characters, and the characters' own efforts to sell or learn how to utilize the item. Perhaps they do not know what the item is, where it came from, who gave it to them, who the rightful or proper owner is, and what makes it valuable. The adventure lies in finding the answers to these questions. The motivation has switched from greed to curiosity.

- **Escape.** The characters wind up in a dangerous situation, with their lives or freedom threatened. They are faced with a simple choice: escape or be killed.

The prime motivation of this hook is fear. The characters may start the adventure in a position of relative comfort and safety, but soon blunder into dangerous territory, perhaps as the result of a vehicle failure, an invasion of monsters, the accidental reading a magical inscription that releases a vampire from its tomb, or the simple act of taking a wrong fork in the road.

The advantage of this hook is that it immediately puts the characters into the action. The adventure comes to them, whether they want it to or not. The disadvantage is that this can place the characters in the position of reacting to events, rather than initiating them. Running away – and still more running away.

The solution is to have the threat result from the characters' own actions. The method of escaping the danger lies in the characters analyzing their previous actions and correcting them, or in cleverly turning the tables on their pursuers.

Another version of this hook is the escape-from-prison adventure. In this hook, the characters are captured and stripped of all (or at least most) of their possessions. They are removed from their friends and placed in a harsh (and often violently brutal) environment. They must use their wits to merely survive, let alone escape.

To use this detrimental hook effectively, the game master must first create an overwhelmingly powerful force that can incapacitate and capture the characters – quickly, and without killing

them outright. (Drugs slipped into food or drink, a hostage that the characters care about, or governments or corporations with lots of money to spend on armaments are good options.) Once the characters are behind bars, make it truly miserable for them. The character's first escape attempt should probably fail (unless it's a truly brilliant plan), since the guards have probably dealt with escape attempts before and know what to expect.

One variation on this hook is to make the danger something that is only hinted at. A prophecy, for example, might warn of dire consequences to come, unless a particular action (the adventure) is carried out. The characters are left guessing as to whether this prediction is accurate or not – but are unlikely to want to take any chances, especially if the foretold consequences are unpleasant enough.

- **Mistaken identity.** One (or all) of the characters is mistaken for somebody else. As a result, that character is given top-secret information or a valuable item. Alternatively, the character is attacked, or is given instructions on how to carry out an illegal act. Whatever follows as a result of the mistake in identity, there is a puzzle to solve. The message is encrypted, the exact nature of the valuable item is unknown, a mystifying clue is found in the pocket of the dead attacker, or the request ties in to an inexplicable series of events that have already occurred, fitting a pre-existing pattern perfectly. As a result, the characters are drawn into the adventure by their curiosity. The main question to be answered is simple: Why me?

The advantage of this hook is that, once again, the adventure winds up in the characters' laps, whether they want it there or not. The disadvantage is that, if the players themselves are not naturally inquisitive or attentive to clues, their characters may not bother to try to solve the mystery that the hook presents. In a worst-case scenario, they will be dead before the adventure even gets off the ground.

The solution to the lack of inquisitiveness is to give the characters a personal stake in getting involved in the adventure – turning it into either a detrimental or advantageous hook. Perhaps they wind up in physical danger as a result of being mis-identified, or perhaps they can cash in big on this misunderstanding. The motivation becomes fear or greed, rather than curiosity.

Whichever of these hooks you start with, the trick is to place the characters in an active, rather than reactive situation. Try to design the hook so that the adventure will result from the characters' own actions.

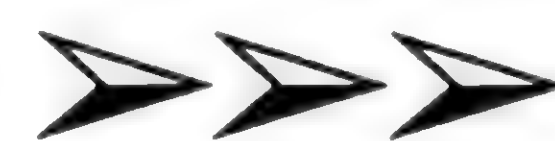
That way, the players won't be so quick to see the hand of the game master nudging them into the desired course of action. Think about what a character would logically do in a given situation (given the genre of the game) and design the hook accordingly, taking into account as many variables as you can.

Play upon the most basic and powerful of motivations: greed, revenge, pity, desire for power or status, friendship, curiosity, fear – or even love, if romance is a part of your campaign. Rescuing a loved one from a dangerous situation (the "damsel in distress" scenario) is a cliché because it works.

Whenever possible, link these motivations to the real-world emotions of the players, hooking them at gut level. If you don't know the players personally (if you're writing an adventure for publication, for example) your writing skills will have to fulfil this function. Describe the hook in terms that the average person would empathize with, using lots of tried-and-true scenes that are sure to evoke an emotional response. An injured pet or frightened child is almost certain to tug at a player's sympathies, while a cleverly worded taunt or action that is considered beyond the pale in our real-world society is sure to evoke anger and disgust. Don't be afraid to use clichéd characters, as long as their motivations are logical and workable. Just make sure the adventure itself holds some surprises.

Finally, go ahead and mix up the adventure hooks given above. The best hooks are double barbed, after all.

Coming up next issue: Choosing the right mix of plot elements for your adventure.



Lisa Smedman

Lisa has designed a number of adventures for TSR's *Dungeons & Dragons* game, primarily for their Ravenloft product line. She has also written for West End Games (*Indiana Jones* and *Star Wars*), Chameleon Eclectic (*Millennium's End* and *Psychosis*), and Precedence Publishing (*Immortal*).

Lisa is currently at work on *The Lucifer Deck*, a novel for FASA's Shadowrun game that is due for release in 1996. Her short fiction has appeared in *Dragon Magazine* and various SF and fantasy publications. She lives in Burnaby, B.C., where she coordinates the B.C. Science Fiction Association's writers' workshop.

FROM OUR READERS

Steve Saunders, of Fairfax, California offers the following observations via e-mail:

The "best" adventure hook is one that ties directly into the characters and their motivations. For the hack 'n' slasher, it's violence (usually with a context of "saving the Misty Vale from the hordes" or some other noble sentiment that allows for bloodshed with a clear conscience), usually followed by loot.

For the looter/collector, it's straight loot (sometimes with a context as above, sometimes not). Both of these hooks are pretty clichéd by now though, so they aren't as good as they used to be.

Anything that makes the hook more personal is good. For example, the characters' home town is in the area that is about to be overrun, or an NPC who will suffer is closely based on the girlfriend, child, best friend, etc. of the player (not the character!).

For games that have "disadvantages" or "character histories" or other keys to the psychology of the PCs, tie in at least one major or two to three minor elements of the characters' personalities and/or backgrounds. GM's who ignore PC background are a chronic complaint.

The really creative GM will play to both character and player tastes at the same

time. If the player, for instance, is an avid technophile, have some hint of new technology (Greek fire or gunpowder in a fantasy world, "technology of an ancient culture" in a science fiction world, etc.). Add something titillating for the player who likes the risque (the slavers have raided a nunnery!), and hint at arcane or esoteric secrets for the player who fancies herself an amateur occultist.

One thing about keying the hook to the player: make sure you are well prepared, because you're likely to be delving into a subject your player knows better than average. Don't try to describe a martial artist's "cool" moves to the black belt in your group, because he'll know those moves are suicide in a real fight.

When using vengeance as a motivator, don't forget to alternate between insult and injury. If the player characters are avenging an attack against them and their target arranges a humiliating public insult (getting dumped on by a manure cart, for example), they may be even angrier than after the loss of mere hit points! Later someone's favorite magic item is stolen, then someone's prize warhorse is painted pink with red hearts and lavender bunny-rabbits, then...

Just as fishermen use treble-hooked lures and multiple baited hooks, you can

create a situation where the hooks abound. For example: helpless villagers (pity) with a magic wishing well (greed) are under a mysterious threat (curiosity) that was prophesied to affect the entire land (fear) if not stopped by midwinter festival (time pressure). Even in a published adventure, most parties should be well hooked by this display of carrots and sticks!

If prepping for your own group, try to have at least one hook that applies to each member of the party. A single hook may apply to more than one member, or even to everyone. Still, planning multiple hooks gives you a form of "insurance" against having mis-read the players.

sms@sungod.itron-ca.com



Steve Saunders

Steve has been gaming since the late 1970s, when he discovered *Gamma World*. He set up gaming clubs in his high school and at college, and has played *AD&D*, *Traveller*, *Chivalry & Sorcery*, *HERO*, *RuneQuest*, *Elric*, *RoleMaster*, *GURPS*, *Shadowrun*, *Mage*, and a number of wargames. His current favorite is *Ars Magica*. He works as a computer systems administrator for UNIX.

A Little Mood Music

Care for a little background music with that adventure? For years, game masters have used movie soundtracks and instrumental music to set the mood for their adventures. Now, two companies are offering music written especially for gaming.

DM Music is a Belgian company with three CD releases, each geared toward a different type of adventure. *Dark Themes From Beyond* is designed to accompany anything in the dark horror genre; it offers up lots of spooky stuff that's a perfect accompaniment to *Call of Cthulhu*. Its only drawback is that a couple of cuts are a little too upbeat and break the mood. But the average CD player can be set to skip these tracks.

The second CD by DM Music is *Battlethemes*. The name says it all. This one contains a mix of music that is suitable for both dark future battles waged with light sabers or guns, and epic barbarian slayfests.

Arthur rounds out the set, providing a mix of slow, brooding pieces, light-hearted Medieval festival

accompaniments, and rousing sword-and-drums mood setters. All three CDs are by Alex Otterlei, who plays and performs all tracks.

The other entrant into the gaming music field is *Gold Rush Games*, which has recently released a *Cyberpunk* music cassette to accompany the popular R. Talsorian Games product of the same name. *Night City Trax* offers ten instrumental compositions by Erich Izdepski. Their driving, electronic beat provides a perfect background to the urban jungle.

Other ideas for music to accompany adventures have poured in via the Internet from game masters who answered our call for suggestions. Thanks to all of you who shared your suggestions with our readers! Here they are:

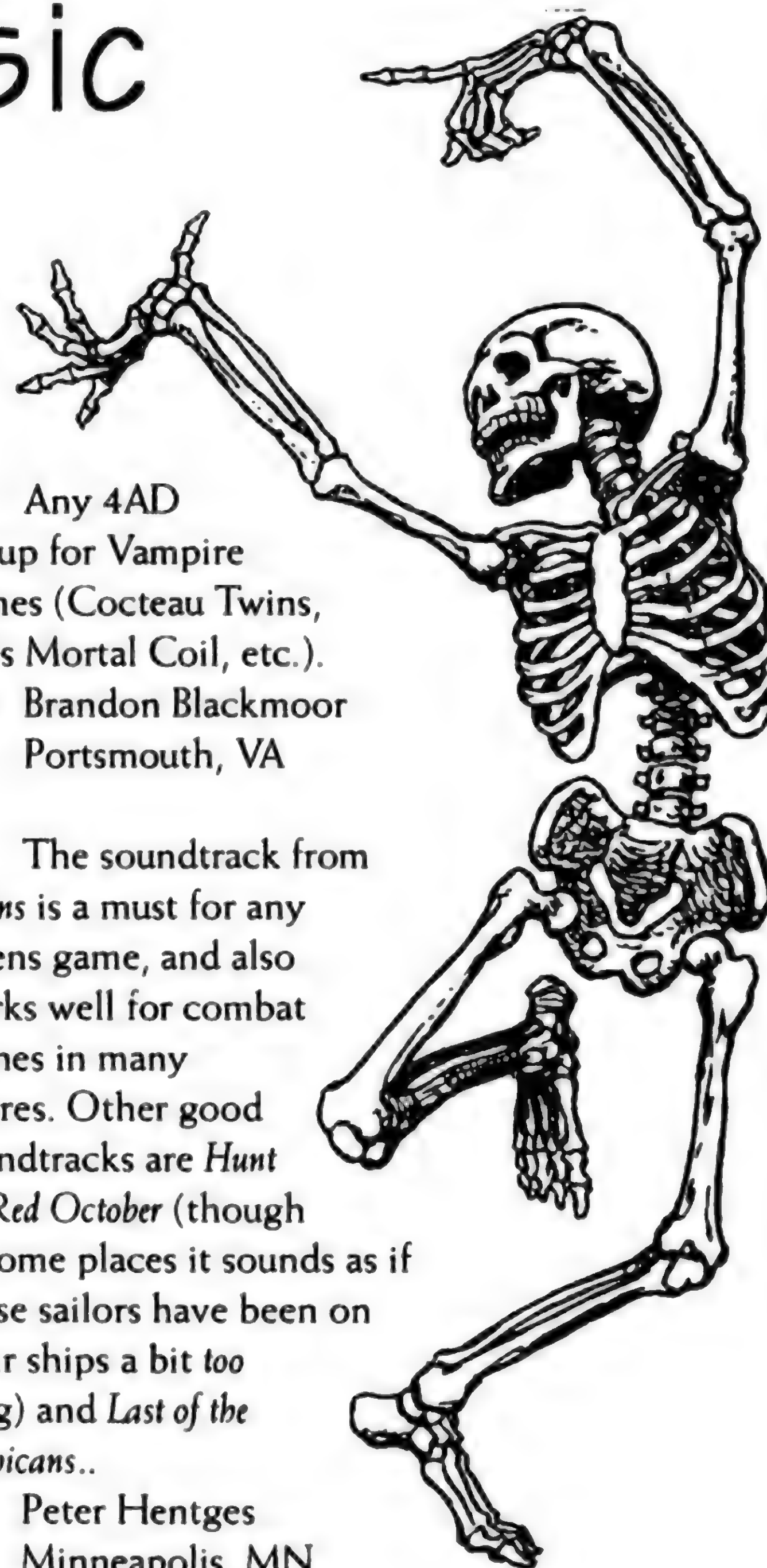
The original *Conan the Barbarian* soundtrack for fantasy, and some Nine Inch Nails for futuristic gritty stuff.
Joe G.K.

Any 4AD group for Vampire games (*Cocteau Twins*, *This Mortal Coil*, etc.).

Brandon Blackmoor
Portsmouth, VA

The soundtrack from *Aliens* is a must for any *Aliens* game, and also works well for combat scenes in many genres. Other good soundtracks are *Hunt for Red October* (though in some places it sounds as if those sailors have been on their ships a bit too long) and *Last of the Mohicans*..

Peter Hentges
Minneapolis, MN



For fantasy I use *Carmina Burana*, Holst's *The Planets* (especially "Mars" and "Saturn") and Dvorak's *New World Symphony* (usually 1st & 4th movements.) This session, however, I think *Empires Collapse* by Cop Shoot Cop will set the tone nicely.

For *Over The Edge* I used stuff like *Bad Penny* by Big Black, *Vote With a Bullet* by Corrosion of Conformity, stuff by Flop, etc.

Greg Stolze
Syracuse, NY

I don't use many sound effects (though if I ever run *Pagan's Grace Under Pressure*, I will!), but I use quite a bit of general mood. The soundtrack to *Lion in Winter* is great for heroic fantasy. Many of the eclectic pieces by the jazz group Oregon are great for setting an otherworldly (not "new age") mood. Movie soundtracks tend to be best, in my humble opinion, since the pieces are short and are more geared to conveying a single mood or image.

Anthony Ragan
Los Angeles, CA

Space opera sci-fi is great with *The Last Starfighter*, *Star Wars* (et al), *Battlestar Galactica*, and *Total Recall*. Dark future is good with *Robocop* and *Robocop 3* (both by Basil Poledouris), *Total Recall*, *The Terminator* and *T2*.

Action games are good with *Red Dawn* (Basil P. again), as well as many of the war soundtracks like *Patton*, *Force 10 From Navarone*, and *The Great Escape*.

Western and Victorian games go good with *Tombstone*, *Wyatt Earp* (a little sappy, but okay mostly), *Silverado*, and *Quigley Down Under* (Basil P. yet again).

Mysterious games definitely need *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (Bernard Hermann). And when I run *Critter Commandos*, I use *The Carl Stalling Project*, parts 1 & 2.

Paul Lidberg
Crunchy Frog/Nightshift Games

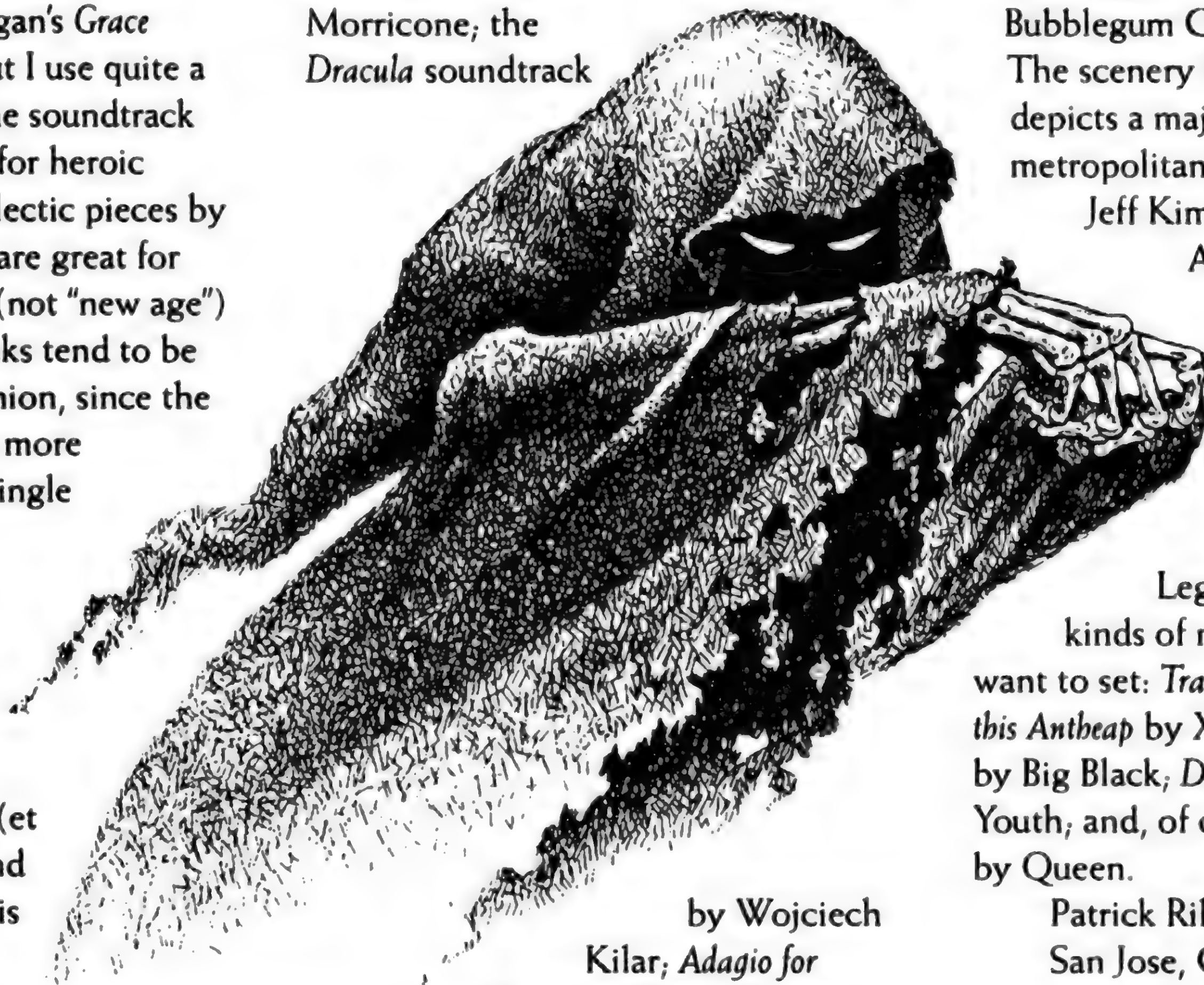
I regularly play *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov when we're playing *Al Qadim*.

Avis L. Crane
New Hampshire

I often use background/mood music for my games. I'm all for it. I have a growing collection of CDs – from *Inventions From the Blue Line*, by Mike Post, to *Pacific Shores: Sounds of the Surf* – and I know of this great Cyberpunk music cassette :)

Mark Arsenault
Gold Rush Games

Dark, gloomy or otherwise introspective stuff: *The Secret Garden* (not the musical, but the soundtrack by Zbigniew Preisner); *The Mission* soundtrack by Ennio Morricone; the *Dracula* soundtrack



by Wojciech Kilar; *Adagio for Strings* by Samuel Barber; *Adagio* by Tomaso Albinoni; and almost anything by Dead Can Dance.

Edge of your seat stuff: the *Terminator 2* soundtrack by Brad Fiedel; or *Carmina Burana* (particularly "O Fortuna") by Carl Orff.

Sweeping Epic Stuff: the *Henry V* soundtrack by Patrick Doyle; the *Mishima* soundtrack by Philip Glass; *Dragon: the Bruce Lee Story* soundtrack by Randy Edelman; and almost anything by Wagner, particularly the *Ring Cycle*.

Faraway, exotic lands stuff: *The Mask and Mirror* by Loreena McKennitt; or almost anything by Dead Can Dance.

Whimsical faery stuff: anything by Enya.

James Estes
Washington, DC

I'm surprised Peter Gabriel's *Passion* isn't on the list. And if I could find a copy of the soundtrack for *The*

Green Forest I'd pick it up quick. It's very strange and moody.

Has anyone heard of *Begotten*? It's a neo-punk, dark-world symbolic film with no dialogue and a really great soundtrack (little music but lots of mood, sound effects and atmosphere). This is a very, very weird film, with a soundtrack to match.

Joe Coleman
Berkeley, CA

I've got an obscure soundtrack for *Shadowrun/Cyberpunk* genres: the opening soundtrack for Japanimation *Bubblegum Crisis' AD Police Files*. The scenery that goes with it also depicts a major, futuristic metropolitan area, too.

Jeff Kim
Austin, TX

I'm gearing up to start something I call "Head Games" (based loosely on *Immortal* and

Legacy) and I'm finding all kinds of music for the mood I want to set: *Travels in Nibilation* and *Across this Anthep* by XTC; *Cables* and *Shotgun* by Big Black; *Dirty Boots* by Sonic Youth; and, of course, *A Kind of Magic* by Queen.

Patrick Riley
San Jose, CA

If anyone has been to their local Target store lately, they may have noticed a special rack with CD's titled *Nature Melodies* or something similar. I picked up *Wolf Songs* and *Thunder Blues* for my horror campaign and both are excellent. They feature moody, classical music played over the sounds of rushing water, thunderstorms and howling wolves. You may want to check them out as well.

Oh and speaking of great theme music, Rick Wakeman's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* is still at the top of my list. You can also pick up Wakeman's *Greatest Hits* on CD, which includes most of the *Journey* stuff as well as his *King Arthur* series.

JollyBlackburn
Ontario, CA

**Betray your friends. Crush your enemies.
Control the world. Drink some coffee.**

ILLUMINATI

*New World Order*TM

The trading-card edition of the original classic game of
deception and intrigue, by Steve Jackson

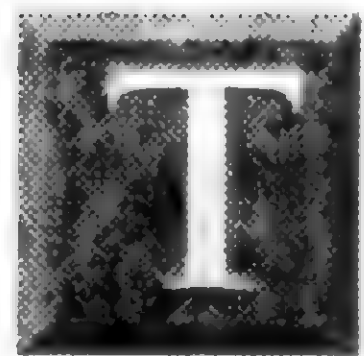


Available for Winter 1991

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

'TO BELIEVE

BY DARREN RIDER



To Believe is a scenario for the Kult™ game, and is geared towards the secret agent template. It was written for Federal agents stationed in the U.S., but with minor changes could be made to suit any campaign.

To Believe is intended to be played in one or two evenings, and is suitable for any size of group. Chicago and nearby cities form the setting of this adventure, but no in-depth knowledge of the area is necessary.

The scenario makes use of material found in the *Legions Of Darkness* sourcebook, which game masters may want to consult for further ideas, but it is not necessary to have this book to play.

The case is designed to reveal more about the Illusion and how the characters are trapped in it. As the agents investigate, they will stumble upon strange occurrences and be confronted by esoteric ideas which they may find very difficult to report.

ABOUT THE AGENTS

Being a federal agent is a difficult job, especially if you are assigned one of the files that the Federal Bureau of Investigation designates as Classification: Unknown. Dealing with such strange situations make most agents pick the path of being a believer or a non-believer. Non-believer agents usually attempt to rationalize what they have just witnessed, while believers are better equipped to deal with the strange situations they find themselves in when investigating these cases.

GAME MASTERING THIS CASE

- In the world of Kult, nothing is as it seems and every secret is hidden by the Illusion. *To Believe* has many story clauses, some of which agents may not pick up on. Don't worry; the little bits of extra information are meant to thicken the plot. By all means feel free to add your own story clauses.

At points in this adventure, there are instructions for the game master to make up an explanation or story detail. This allows you to customize *To Believe* to fit your campaign.



THE ASSIGNMENT

The agents are flown to Chicago to interview a man who is supposedly decaying to death (he is aging faster than normal). The name of the man is Jared, and the hospital is Chicago General. Because of the background of the case, the F.B.I. felt a full investigation would be required. The agents are given no further details.

Part 1: Chicago General Hospital

- At the hospital, the agents are met by Dr. Townsend.
- This doctor is very helpful, and explains that Jared was admitted two days ago. He was transferred from Rockford Asylum in Rockford, Illinois. If the agents think to ask, Dr. Townsend can tell them that Jared's medical bills are paid by a Father Omali, a priest at the Holy Trinity church in Rockford.
- When the agents interview Jared, they find him completely maniacal and incomprehensible. He constantly babbles about how "they" are going to free Satan, and how Satan will rule the world. He also quotes the Bible extensively. A sample raving:

"The beast was given a mouth for uttering proud boasts and blasphemies, but the authority it received was to last only forty-two months. It began to hurl blasphemies against God, reviling him and the members of his heavenly household as well. The beast was allowed to wage war against God's people and conquer them."

Book of Revelations, as quoted by Jared

Part 2: Following the Clues

After the interview at the hospital, the agents are left with a couple of leads to follow up. The first is the name of the asylum from which Jared was transferred. The second lead is the name of Father Omali.

"What do you know about the truth? The truth is all twisted."

David Hertog
The Philadelphia Experiment 2

ROCKFORD ASYLUM

If the agents pay a visit to the asylum Jared spent time in, they can learn that he was admitted to the asylum one and a half weeks ago. He was enrolled in a therapy session, and spoke with councillors daily. Due to the short period of time Jared spent at the asylum it is unknown if he was making any progress.

The councillors at the Rockford Asylum took notes of what Jared said in his therapy sessions, but these quotes sound as disjointed and nonsensical as Jared's earlier ravings at the hospital. A sample quote:

"...those who had never worshipped the beast or its image nor accepted its mark. They shall come to life again and reign with Christ for a thousand years. These are the people my friends and I protect at our hide out."

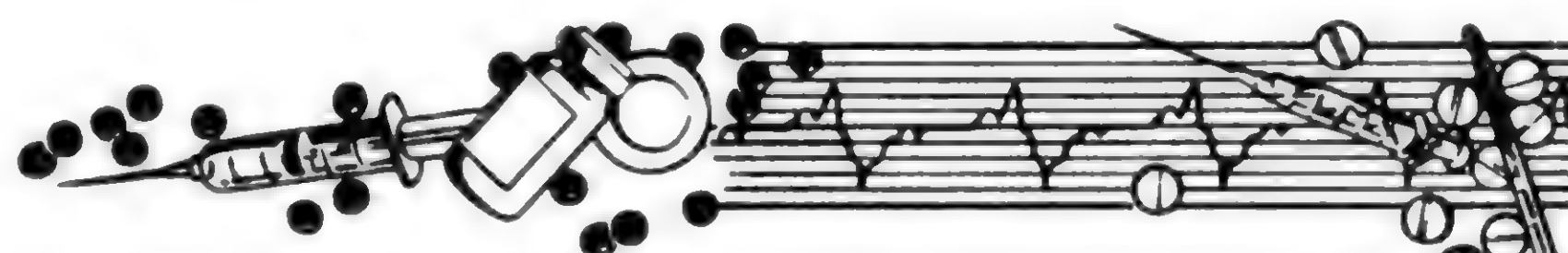
One point is brought out, but should not be stated until after several questions. In the sessions, Jared made numerous references to something he called the "hide out." None of the councillors knows where this is, but due to Jared's constant ramblings about death, rising from the grave, and tombstones, they believe he is referring to a graveyard of some sort.

VISITING FATHER OMALI

Seeing Father Omali is not a problem; he is quite happy to see the agents. As soon as they mention

Jared's name, he asks how Jared is doing, and what interest they have in Jared.

Father Omali has a lot of information to offer but the agents should have to coax it out of him. While being questioned, the Father will be a little scared that he will get in some sort of trouble because he had ties with Jared and his friends, whom he refers to as "the boys." (See the section Jared's Friends for details.) Even though Father Omali has the advantage Honesty, this doesn't mean he will tell the agents everything he knows. It simply means he



Dr. David Townsend

Quote: "Yes, it's a strange case indeed. How can I help?"

PERSONALITY: Dr. Townsend will be cautious when speaking to the agents. He will probably avoid answering any questions until he knows what the agents want. Once he understands that they want information regarding Jared he will relax and cooperate with the interview.

ROLEPLAY HINTS: Speak slowly and clearly. Use unfamiliar medical terms, then repeat these in lay terms that the agents can understand. Be suspicious at first, then loosen up and speak freely.

AGL: 10 EGO: 14 STR: 09 CHA: 11
CON: 11 PER: 10 COM: 10 EDU: 17

HEIGHT: 185 cm

WEIGHT: 75 kg

MOVEMENT: 20 m/round

ACTIONS: 2

INITIATIVE BONUS: 0

DAMAGE BONUS: 0

DAMAGE CAPACITY: 4 scratches = 1 light wound; 3 light wound = 1 serious wound; 3 serious wounds = 1 fatal wound.

ENDURANCE: 85

DISADVANTAGES: Paranoia/15; Wanted/ 5 (make up the reason).

ADVANTAGES: Luck/ 20

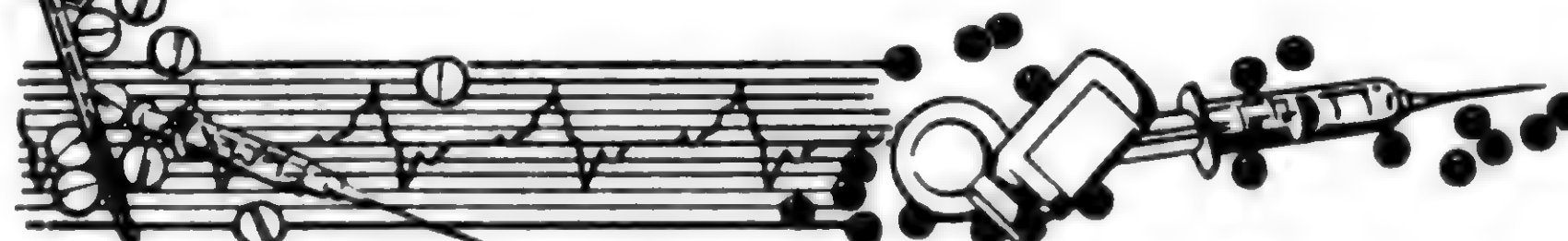
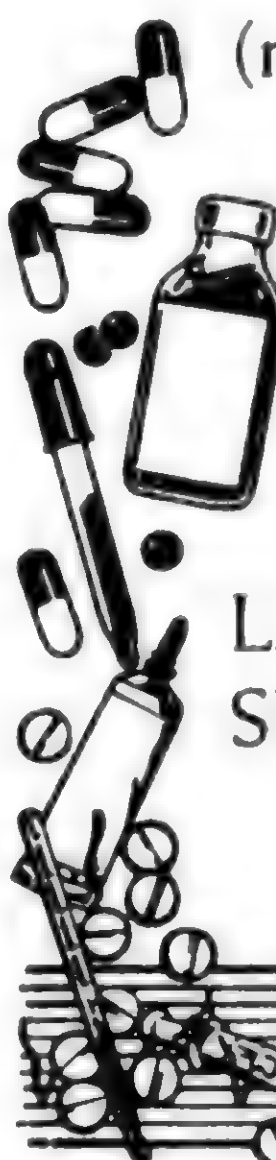
MENTAL BALANCE: 0

DARK SECRET: Forbidden Knowledge (make it up).

PROFESSION: Medical doctor.

LIVING STANDARD: 6

SKILLS: Computer/14; Poison and Drugs/13; Chemistry/8.

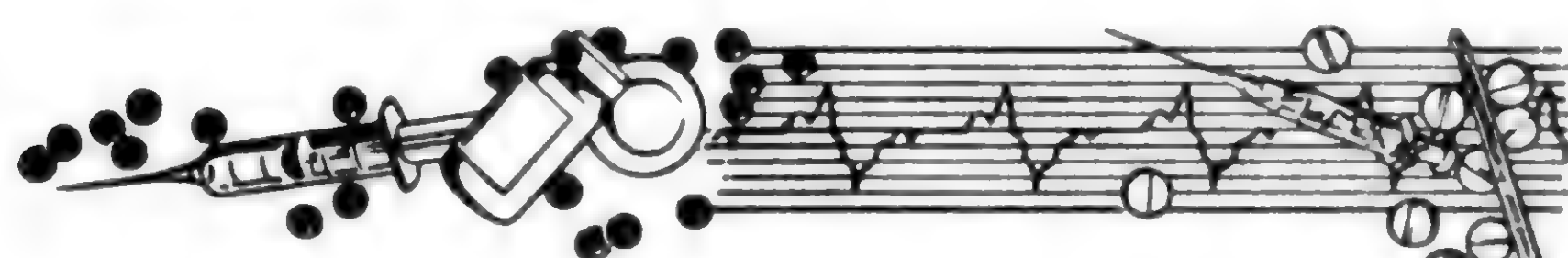


will try to avoid some questions, rather than telling outright lies.

FATHER OMALI'S INFORMATION

Read the following information carefully; it includes everything that Father Omali knows about Jared and his friends. Try to know enough of the information so that you can ad lib Father Omali's answers to the agents' questions.

Father Omali has known Jared for many months.



Jared (last name unknown)

Quote: "Do you know Satan, huh, do you? Stop him, I say. Stop him! Burn the witch; burn them all!"

ROLEPLAY HINTS: Jared is unable to answer questions coherently due to his mental condition. Mumbling about Satan is the only dialogue Jared has to offer.

Jared looks to be in his sixties. The hospital has photos of him from two days ago; he appears to be about thirty in these pictures. His condition is the result of a ritual spell cast on him by a cult known as the Ordo Fratrīs Mortis. The spell is Lore Of Death, Putrefy Other's Body. (See Part 5 of this adventure for details of the Ordo Fratrīs Mortis.)

AGL: 16 EGO: 10 STR: 11 CHA: 09
CON: 14 PER: 12 COM: 10 EDU: 08

HEIGHT: 190 cm

WEIGHT: 85 kg

MOVEMENT: 28 m/round

ACTIONS: 3

INITIATIVE BONUS: +4

DAMAGE BONUS: +2

DAMAGE CAPACITY: 4 scratches = 1 light wound; 3 light wound = 1 serious wound; 3 serious wound = 1 fatal wound.

ENDURANCE: 100

DISADVANTAGES: Wanted/15; Paranoia/15; Manic Depressive/20; Fanaticism/10.

ADVANTAGES: Forgiving/5.

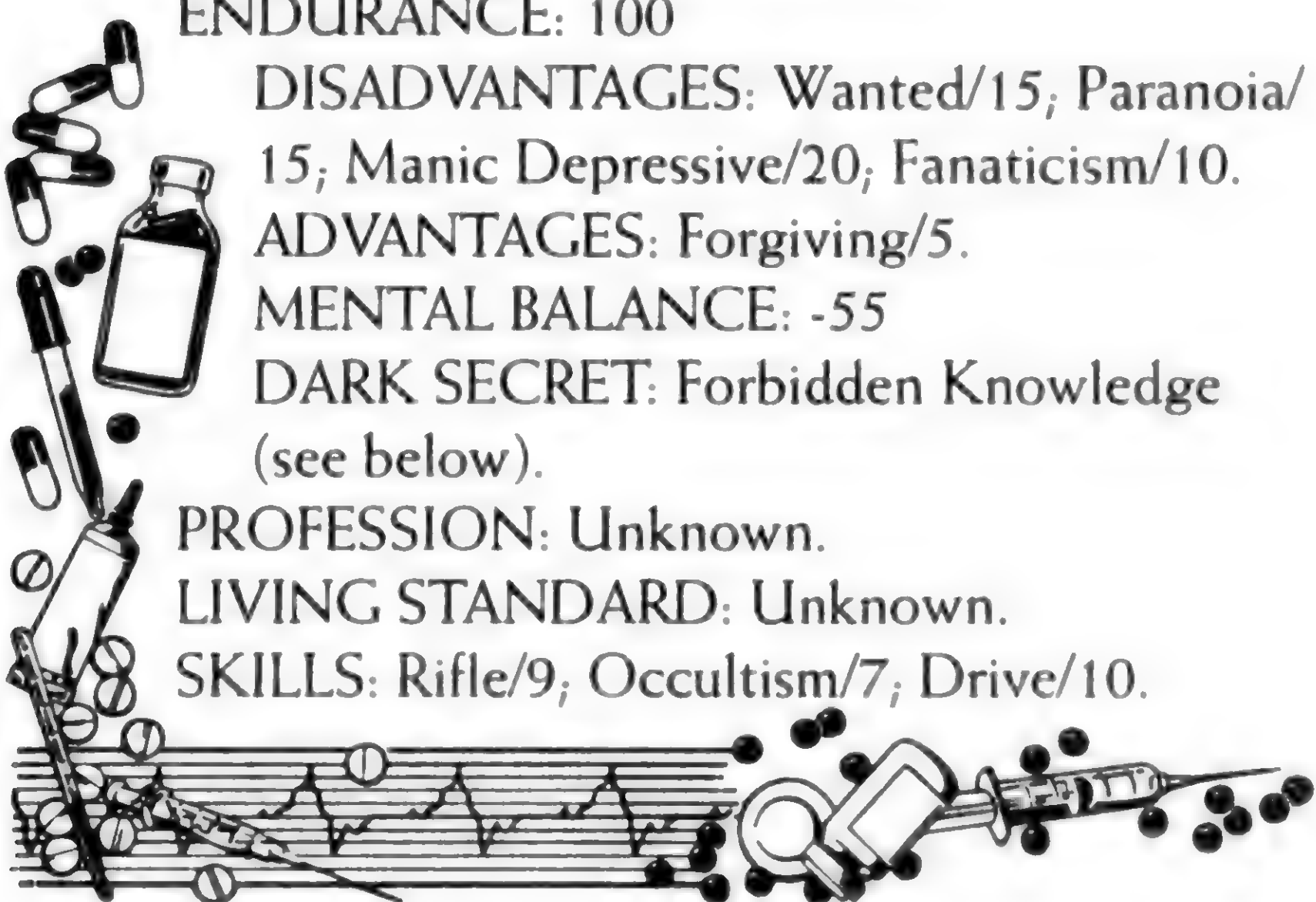
MENTAL BALANCE: -55

DARK SECRET: Forbidden Knowledge (see below).

PROFESSION: Unknown.

LIVING STANDARD: Unknown.

SKILLS: Rifle/9; Occultism/7; Drive/10.



- He liked to hang around Holy Trinity church, doing odd jobs. He has three close friends: Michael, Kail and Jacob. The priest does not know their last names.

- Four months ago, Jared and his friends approached Father Omali and asked if he would support something they referred to as an "inquisition." They called themselves the Believers, and said they were attempting to hunt down "evil doers" and bring them to justice. Father Omali did not know how to answer such a request. He told them that God takes kindly to any work done in his name.

- Over the next four months the group reported to him weekly. "I was worried that something bad would happen," says Father Omali. "But their activities appeared harmless enough."

- One month ago the reports became strange. The group claimed they were on the tail of a cult that was going to "rip a shred out of reality" and bring Hell to our world. Father Omali was disturbed by this statement and asked the group to leave his office.

- Two weeks later, the Believers came back and asked for Omali's help. Jared and his friends said they needed someone with a "direct connection with God" to help them fight the cult. Father Omali was appalled by their request, but agreed to meet them the following night.

- Directly after the conversation he called the police. The next night, when Jared came to pick Father Omali up, he was then taken into custody. He refused to reveal the whereabouts of the other three members of the Believers.

- Jared was sent to a local asylum for assessment. Father Omali paid his medical bills because he felt sorry for Jared. He has not heard from the rest of the group since Jared's arrest.

- The most important piece of information Father Omali has to offer is where the group frequently met – in the Pinewood Cemetery, a graveyard just outside of Chicago. This is where Jared was going to take Father Omali on the night that he was arrested. (Agents should have to ask before being given this piece of information.)

Part 3: The Graveyard

- The graveyard is three blocks long and is filled with antiquated mausoleums and elaborate tombstones. It is surrounded by a high stone wall. A parking lot lies just outside the main gates, and a cross-shaped, one-lane road leads into the graveyard. The gates to the cemetery are locked and nobody can be seen inside.

- A work yard is located toward the back of the graveyard, and is surrounded by a chain-link fence. Inside the fence are plastic grave liners, wheelbarrows, and a small tractor. Given the jumbled state of these items, it looks as though the graveyard's

upkeep has slipped over the last few weeks. The work yard also includes a one-story tool shed. The front sliding door is closed with a padlock.

RECENT EVENTS

A couple of hours before the agents arrive, the Ordo Fratris Mortis came to see the capture or death of the last three members of the Believers. They managed to capture Kail and Michael (and are planning to sacrifice them later, to put an end to their meddling). Jacob, however, eluded them. When the agents arrive, Jacob believes that they are members of the Ordo Fratris Mortis.

Jacob is confused and uncertain what to believe any more. As soon as he sees the agents, he shoots at them with a rifle, but soon breaks off his attack and just sits behind a tombstone, crying. (Use the statistics for Jared.) If the agents kill Jacob they can find the clues they need by searching the shack. If Jacob lives, they can interrogate him.

Jacob answers any questions the agents ask. He does not know the location of the Ordo Fratris Mortis or the names of its members; he just knows that it exists, and that its leader, a "man in a white

"One night as I lay in bed, God sent an Angel down to me. The Angel told me of men who have betrayed God. The Angel named these sinners the Ordo Fratris Mortis."
Jacob

coat" makes frequent visits to the graveyard. If asked how he knows the name of the cult, he mutters, "An Angel told me."

As the agents are talking to Jacob, he singles out one member of the group (preferably a believer) and tells that individual about a "holy cross" that can be used to battle the cult. He urges the agent to recover the cross from the shed. "Use it with faith," he says. (If Jacob died in the firefight with the agents, they find a key in his jacket pocket that is marked with the words: TOOL SHED.)

SPECTER ATTACK

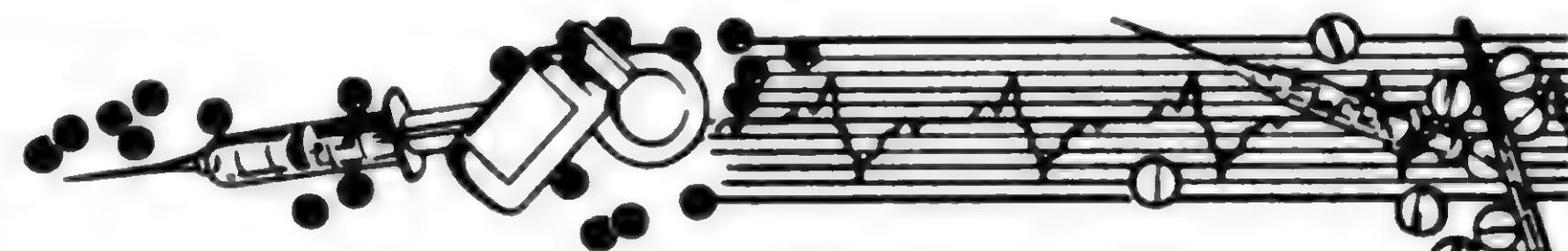
As soon as the agents have either been told about the cross or have found the key on Jacob's body, they are attacked by five specters. (Use the Specter statistics on page 213 of the Kult rulebook.)

These creatures of death were summoned by the Ordo Fratris Mortis to destroy Jacob, after he eluded them earlier. Their primary goal is to destroy Jacob, but if the agents get in the way they will attack them, too. During the attack, Jacob should be difficult to

- save. If he lives, award the agents with extra experience. If Jacob is already dead, the specters break off their attack after reaching Jacob's body.

SEARCHING THE SHED

- Inside the shed, the agents can find crude accommodations for four people – four cots covered in musty blankets. Opened cans of food lie about and a foul smell hangs in the air. All sorts of religious literature is strewn about the dirt floor. The only



Father Omali

- Quote: " Our Lord gives such strange signs."

- PERSONALITY: Father Omali is fairly concerned for "the boys." If the agents befriend him, he will attempt to help them any way he can. He also has a strange presence about him. It's as if someone or something is watching over him. (This is a result of his Unwilling Medium disadvantage.)

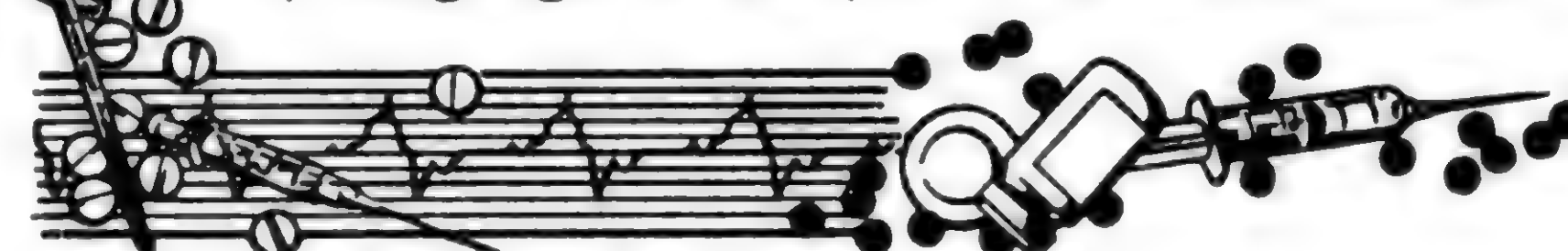
- ROLEPLAY HINTS: Omali is very soft spoken. He will always attempt to define all situations as a sign from God.

AGL: 07 EGO: 16 STR: 10 CHA: 13
CON: 11 PER: 16 COM: 14 EDU: 14

HEIGHT: 175 cm
WEIGHT: 185 kg
MOVEMENT: 14 m/round
ACTIONS: 2
INITIATIVE BONUS: -1
DAMAGE BONUS: 0
DAMAGE CAPACITY: 4 scratches = 1 light wound; 3 light wound = 1 serious wound; 3 serious wound = 1 fatal wound.
ENDURANCE: 85
DISADVANTAGES: Unwilling Medium/15.

ADVANTAGES: Motherliness/5; Sixth Sense/15.
MENTAL BALANCE: +5
DARK SECRET: Victim of medical experiment (make it up).
PROFESSION: Priest.
LIVING STANDARD: 4

SKILLS: Climb/4; Sneak/5; Hypnosis/6; Meditation/4; Occultism/6; Parapsychology/3; Language: Latin/6; Humanistic Scholar/6.



light available is what manages to seep through cracks in the metal roof.

Hidden under one of the mattresses is a sharpened cross. It is covered with rust, except for the bottom, which is shiny because it has been sharpened to a point. It looks as though it is intended to be used as a thrusting weapon. The cross is about six inches long and four inches wide.

The cross has Jacob's soul bound into it. He did this years ago through worship, by devoting himself to a god that does not exist. His worship was so strong, however, that his faith – and his soul – were bound into his cross.

When battling anything from outside the Illusion, the cross does double damage (treat it as a knife). If battling a creature with a Terror Throw Modifier add a positive version of that modifier to the hit roll of the character using the holy cross. That character also makes ego throws using the same modifier.

Example: Andy is fighting a Nachtkäfer, which has a Terror Throw Modifier of -5. Andy has 3 in dagger, but while using Jacob's cross he would add the positive version of the Nachtkäfer's TTM, for a total of 8. Any terror throws would be done in the same way. Andy's Ego is 11, but the holy cross would give Andy an Ego throw of 16. The big catch to Jacob's item is only believers can use it in this manner.

Part 4: Finding the Believers

Once they have had a chance to search the graveyard, the agents receive a telephone call, from Father Omali. He tells them that the Kail and Michael were admitted, earlier that evening, to a hospital named St. Paul in downtown Chicago. Dr. Marks, one of the hospital's physicians, phoned Father Omali, since the pair listed the priest's name as their next of kin.

Father Omali says that Dr. Marks told him that the pair had been in an automobile accident. They were found inside a locked car that had gone over a cliff. Father Omali finds this odd, since to the best of his knowledge, neither Kail nor Michael owned a car – or even had a driver's licence.

When Father Omali telephoned the hospital back, a few minutes later, a different doctor

- answered. This doctor (whose name the priest did not get) told him that the two Believers were in critical condition and may not live through the night.
- When the priest offered to administer the last rites to them, the doctor said that a mistake had been made, and the two were actually in stable condition and were in no danger of dying.

AT ST. PAUL'S

- St. Paul's Hospital is located in Arlington Heights.
- At the reception, the agents can ask for Dr. Marks.
- He will show them to Kail's room. On the way to the room, he explains that Kail's condition is

listed as stable. If asked, he can tell them that Michael is in surgery.

Dr. Marks is a young intern who has only recently come to work at St. Paul's Hospital. He does not realize that many of its doctors belong to the Ordo Fratrīs Mortis, and that the cult has brought Kail and Michael here so that they can be sacrificed. He believes what he was told – that the pair were involved in a car crash. But he is puzzled by the injuries the two men exhibit.

Dr. Marks' unauthorized telephone call to Father Omali (and the resulting visit by the agents) is something that the cult members now have to deal with.

When in Kail's room Dr. Marks administers a shot to Kail, who is in great pain from a

- number of injuries (inflicted by the specters, and not at all similar to the type of injuries caused in a car crash). The needle is filled with opium, but the effect is -10, rather than the standard -5, because Kail has been given this on a regular basis since he was admitted. The effect of the morphine is to make Kail barely understandable. The agents should find this suspicious, but in fact Dr. Marks is quite innocent and the timing of the injection was coincidental.

- While the agents are trying to speak with Kail, doctors at the hospital who are members of the Ordo Fratrīs Mortis set up an ambush for them. After about two minutes, three doctors enter the room with guns drawn. All the cult members want to do is sedate the agents, so their bodies may be sacrificed for their ritual. They also want to take Kail down to the basement, for use in

"How do you explain what we just saw, Sean? Are there really such things as ghosts?"

"There must be a logical explanation. Maybe we were drugged."

"I saw what I saw, man. How do I explain it?"

"Don't worry about it."

"What do you mean, 'Don't worry'? We shot up a fuckin' graveyard. How do I report that?"

RECORDED: 01/16/96.

SUBJECTS: Sean Smith, Henry Jones; F.B.I. agents.

LOCATION: Chicago, Lucky Strike Coffee Shop, 2408 Tabernacle Ave.

NOTE: Conversation regarding a "ghost sighting."

the upcoming sacrifice.

Dr. Marks flees the hospital if a gun battle breaks out. Otherwise, he may be captured and sedated along with the agents. (Use Dr. Townsend's stats for Dr. Marks.)

GUN BATTLE OR CAPTURE?

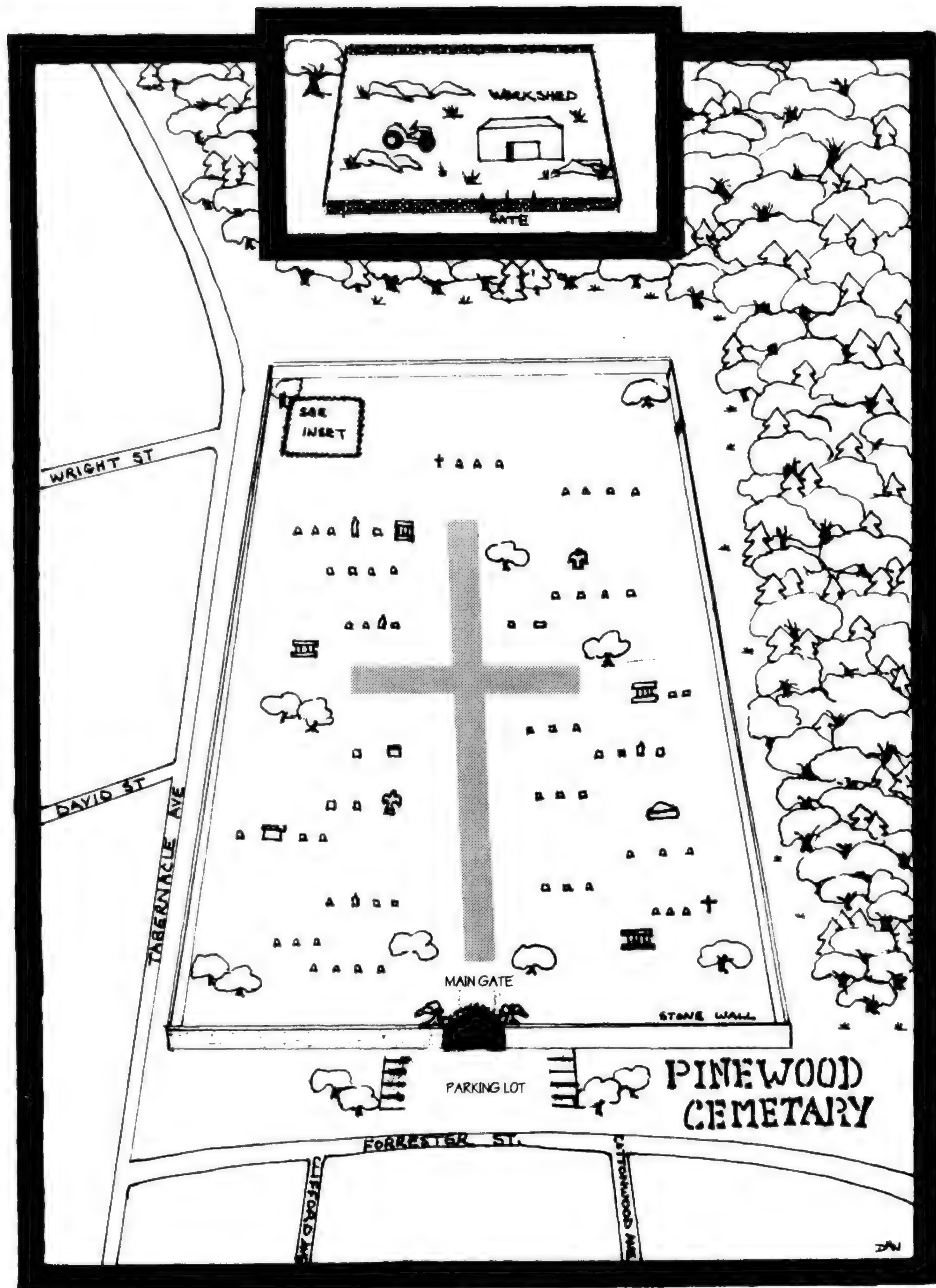
Much depends on this scene. If the agents are captured and sedated (or if they are seriously injured in a gun battle with the doctors), they are taken down to the basement along with Kail. Unless they can somehow escape, they will be sacrificed in a ritual summoning that is already in progress. Give the agents one last chance to escape before they die.

If the agents get into a gun battle with the doctors and win, their next logical move is to look for Michael. He is not in surgery – the hospital's operating theatres are empty (much to Dr. Marks' surprise). Instead, he is in the basement.

Any agents who try to find Michael before the encounter in Kail's room are attacked by five doctors. The doctors try to quietly capture them and take them to the basement, but it is quite possible that a gun battle could happen here, too.

Part 5: Gates to Hell

This is the final scene in *To Believe*. In it, the agents will be witnesses to the fall of reality and will meet terrifying creatures. The agents may witness this as captives about to be sacrificed, or they may have won any gun battles with the cult members and have snuck up on the basement where the



- summoning is taking place. Be prepared to improvise a little, to fit this encounter to the actions of the player characters.
- The leader of this branch of the Ordo Fratr
- Mortis is a man by the name of Dr. Benjamin
- Claxton. He is referred to by the other cult
- members as the Magus Mortualis.
- Claxton is completely fanatical about his
- work. If he captures the agents, he will describe to them his plan in complete detail.
-
-

ORDO FRATRIS MORTIS

The Ordo Fratr Mortis is a cult of doctors who worship Marbas, Lord of Pain. These doctors use Death Magic to preform their sacrifices.

The cult is described in detail on page 120 of the Legions of Darkness sourcebook. There are some changes, however, for the Chicago sect. This group still worships Marbas, but at the same time will sacrifice to any creature of death, just to exercise their death magic. Dr. Claxton and the other cult members have complete control over the hospital.

THE SUMMONING ROOM

The Ordo Fratr Mortis have set up a summoning room in the basement of the hospital. The room was formerly an operating theatre, but now is off-limits to any but the cult members and is filled with computers.

Computer screens cast a dull green glow over the basement room. As I stepped a little further into the room I saw Agent Cooper. She was tied to a bed in the middle of the semi-circle of computers. There were also four other people I did not recognize tied to beds.

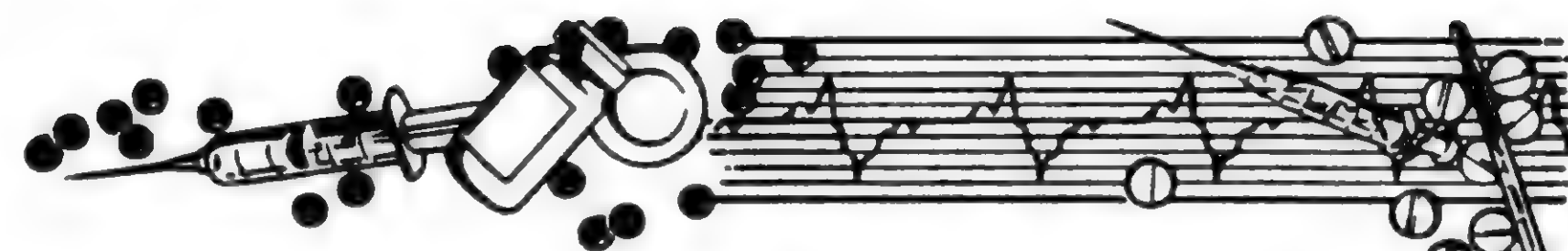
Then the room came into focus as my eyes began to adjust to the light, and I saw figures lining the walls of the room. I could hear light chanting coming from them. I was about to call for backup, but then this toe-tagged son of a bitch attacked me. That was when the shooting began.

Agent Dale Bolt, F.B.I.

Getting to the summoning room is not difficult; both stairs and an elevator offer access to a hallway that leads to the room. Inside the summoning room, the only illumination comes from the dim green light shed by computer screens. Four

beds with people strapped to them are in the middle of the room, within the circle of computers. These victims include Michael, Kail (unless the agents have rescued him and removed him from the hospital), and two (or three) other transients who were recently admitted to hospital (and whom nobody will miss). If any agents have been captured, they are also strapped to bed in this room.

The doctors who are members of the Ordo Fratr Mortis have been busy preparing to summon a Razid, to which they will sacrifice the four sedated victims. The rituals they have already cast are: Hades Walk (their bodies are constantly going back through the Illusion); and Manipulate Death (they first animated the dead, then controlled them). These animated corpses are



Doctors (Ordo Fratr Mortis)

PERSONALITY: Each doctor will act with a malicious intent towards the player characters. He or she will ignore their demands, and will attempt to achieve the goal of the cult (summoning the Razid) by any means necessary.

ROLEPLAY HINTS: Grit your teeth when you speak, and make forceful hand gestures to make a point.

AGL: 2d10 EGO: 2d10 STR: 2d10
CHA: 2d10 CON: 2d10 PER: 2d10
COM: 2d10 EDU: 2d10

MOVEMENT: 6 m/round

ACTIONS: 2

INITIATIVE BONUS: -1

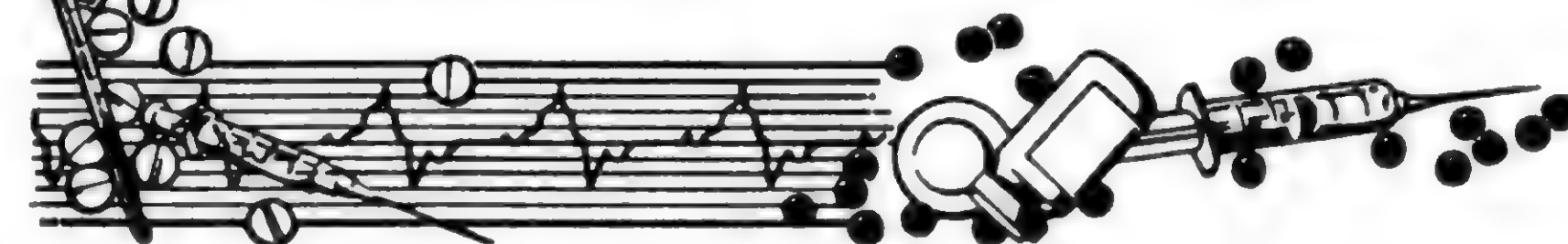
DAMAGE BONUS: +1

DAMAGE CAPACITY: 4 scratches = 1 light wound; 3 light wounds = 1 serious wound; 3 serious wounds = 1 fatal wound.

ENDURANCE: 85

SKILLS: Handgun/5; Occult/4.

For further details see the Mad Scientist template in the Kult rulebook.



intended to help if anything goes wrong. (The spells Summon Creature of Death and Bind Creature of Death were cast so that they will finish at around the same time.)

A total of nine doctors are in the room. Six of them (including Dr. Claxton) line the walls of the room and are chanting. They are focused on the summoning, and pay no attention to the agents. The other three doctors are armed with scalpels and are prepared, if necessary, to fight off any intruders. But before they make an attack themselves, the doctors order four undead creatures to attack. (Use the statistics for the Living Dead, found on page 211 of the Kult rulebook).

The agents can thwart the summoning by incapacitating at least four of the chanting doctors within four turns. If this happens, all the doctors join in the fight, attacking with scalpels. The agents need only kill or incapacitate the doctors to save the day.

If the summoning is completed (this takes



four turns), a Razid appears. If Dr. Claxton is still alive, he laughs uncontrollably and screams in triumph: "The world is doomed!"

The Razid attacks indiscriminately, ravaging the hospital staff and patients, as well as any agents who try to stop it. Be sure to emphasize the seriousness of the situation, and the ramifications of a Razid being let loose to wreak havoc upon an entire hospital. The agents are the only ones who stand between the Razid and the destruction of hundreds of innocent people. Base the experience awarded the agents on the number of lives they save.

Razid

AGL: 34 EGO: 14 STR: 71 CHA: 04
CON: 44 PER: 30 COM: 01 EDU: 14

Refer to page 214 of the Kult rulebook for detailed information on the Razid.

CONVERSION NOTES

Both Kult and Call of Cthulhu are character- and story-driven games. This will aid any hopeful Keeper considerably, in that nothing beyond a few details need be changed to use *To Believe* in a Call of Cthulhu campaign.

The story itself need not be changed in the

- slightest; if your campaign is Cthulhu Now, change nothing beyond the identity of the monsters and the patron of the evil doctors. For a
- campaign set in the 1920s, the Keeper need only
- replace the computers in the summoning room
- with something that is not anachronistic; perhaps
- the walls are papered with dozens of life-sized
- anatomical drawings.

- Kult attributes are generated on 2d10, which
- gives an average value of 10.5, just as the 3d6 of
- Call of Cthulhu do, so any attributes may be
- taken directly without any troublesome
- incongruities. Simply use AGL for DEX, STR for
- STR, CON for CON, COM for APP, EGO for
- POWER, PER for INT, and EDU for EDU. The
- only skills necessary to the flow of the adventure
- are the Handgun and Knife skills of the evil
- doctors, which may be treated as 45% and 40%
- respectively.

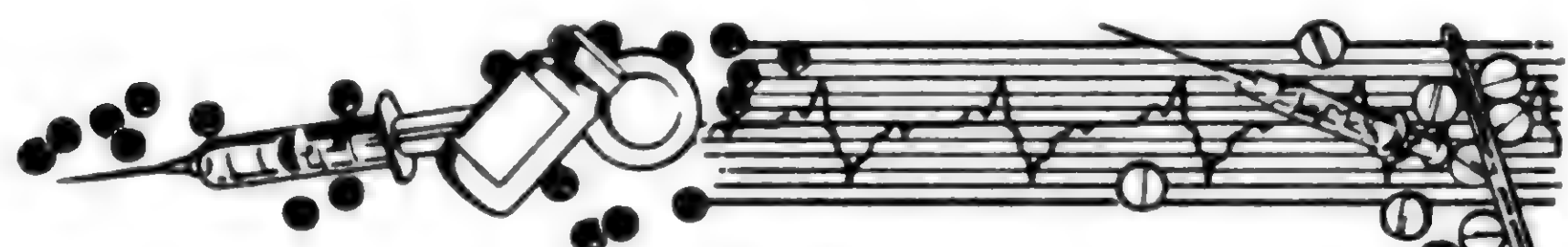
- The spectres in Part III could be replaced by
- ghouls or any other lesser servitors the Keeper
- feels would disturb the investigators – but which
- the investigators would still stand a chance of
- defeating. Marbas, Lord of Pain, is no doubt one
- of the ninety-nine aspects of Nyarlathotep, and
- the razid his avatar.

Nyarlathotep's Razid Form

STR 71 CON 44 SIZ 21 INT 86
POW 100 DEX 19 APP - HP 35
MOVE 16/25

Weapon: Claw Attack 85%; Damage 5d6

Armor: Nyarlathotep has no armor in the razid form. If he is brought to zero hit points he



Dr. Benjamin Claxton

Quote: "Let me tell you how the world will suffer at my feet."

PERSONALITY: Dr. Claxton wishes to be a great wizard who holds unrelenting power. He will take extreme actions to achieve his goals.

ROLEPLAY HINTS: Always act as if you have the upper hand. Laugh at any threats and speak freely of your plans to hold ultimate power. Every so often murmur something (a time and date) under your breath, then return to the conversation with renewed vigor.

AGL: 14 EGO: 20 STR: 12 CHA: 14
CON: 19 PER: 11 COM: 10 EDU: 19

HEIGHT: 190 cm

WEIGHT: 87 kg

MOVEMENT: 7 m/round

ACTIONS: 2

INITIATIVE BONUS: +2

DAMAGE BONUS: +2

DAMAGE CAPACITY: 5 scratches = 1 light wound; 4 light wound = 1 serious wound; 3 serious wounds = 1 fatal

ENDURANCE: 125

ADVANTAGES: Magical Intuition/20

DISADVANTAGES: Wanted/5 (wanted in China for malpractice); Mania/15; Death wish/10; Greed/10; Mental Compulsion/5 (mantras – he recites the times and dates of his previous summoning attempts).

MENTAL BALANCE: -25

DARK SECRET: Insanity.

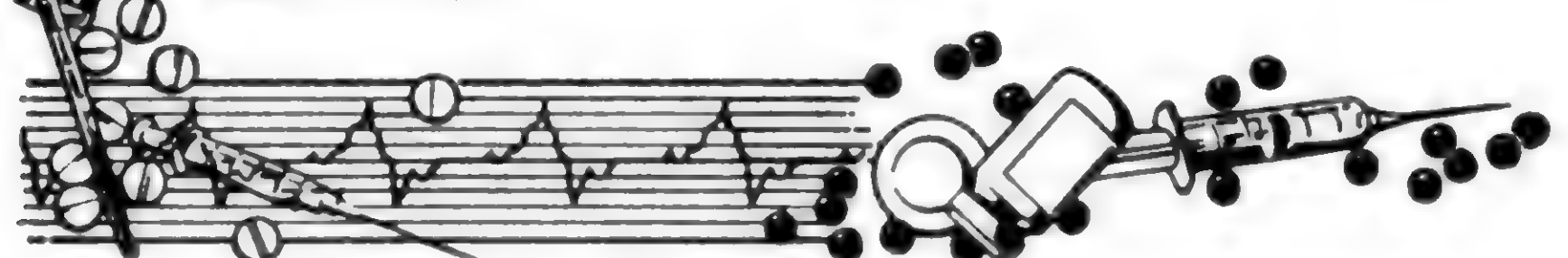
SKILLS: Auto Weapon/5; Handgun/9;

First Aid/20; Information Retrieval/16;

Cryptography/10; Occultism/20; Poisons

and Drugs/15; Medicine/19.

MAGIC: Lore of Death to 40 (all spells at score 20).



collapses on the ground, changes form to a more horrific shape, which causes his viewers to lose Sanity, and then vanishes.

Spells: Nyarlathotep knows no spells in this form.

Sanity: Seeing Nyarlathotep in the Razid Form causes a loss of 1d100 points of Sanity unless a successful Sanity roll is made. (A successful Sanity roll still results in the loss of 1d10 Sanity.)

Appearance: In his Razid Form, Nyarlathotep appears to be an eight-foot-tall, powerfully muscled, black winged demon.



Darren Rider

Darren is a big fan of the horror genre and lists H.P. Lovecraft among his favorite authors and *The Exorcist* and *The Shining* among his favorite films. At 21 years of age, his ambition in life is to "do everything." He's a fan of thrash and punk music, enjoys performing BMX bicycle stunts, and says his favorite games are *Rolemaster*, *Kult*, and *Whispering Vault*.



BORDER WORLDS

BY BRIAN LORANGER AND ANDREW J. LUCAS



ood Day Admiral,

We have a new assignment for you, one that will not be easy.

Our latest intelligence indicates that the empires of our enemies continue to gain a foothold along the border worlds between us. Under the guise of "peaceful explorers" who have come to this region of space in the name of "scientific enlightenment" and "diplomatic relations," they have managed to exploit this disputed region and its people.

Unfortunately, we can no longer ignore this slow, covert encroachment into our territory. Therefore, your new directive is to use whatever resources are at your disposal to regain control of the planets and space locations along the borders between us. If you are successful you will have saved not only the integrity of our own region of space. You will also have spared the people of the border worlds from the tyranny of our enemies.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the wonderful world of Star Trek!

Those of you who are familiar with the Star Trek: The Next Generation Customizable Card Game have no doubt wanted to test your deck against several players at the same time. *Border Worlds* is a set of optional rules that allows you to do just that. Now you can pit your wits against not just one, but several opponents in your fight to control the final frontier.

As with a regular Star Trek card game, your goal in *Border Worlds* is to collect 100 game points by accomplishing missions, while at the same time preventing your opponents from doing the same. You can achieve this goal in a number of ways, fair and foul. Be warned, however: you'll probably find your opponents will use whatever nefarious means are at their disposal.

Before you begin to play *Border Worlds*, you should have a clear understanding of the two-player rules that are laid out in the basic game.

PHASE 1:

DESIGNING YOUR DECK

Each player in *Border Worlds* forms a deck of at least 60 cards. You'll find that you will need a good number of cards for a multi-player session; the more you have, the better off you'll be. When playing against multiple opponents, you can go through cards very quickly. As a rule of thumb, add 10 cards

to your deck for each additional player in the game.

- You and your opponents may want to set a limit on the number of cards that can be included in each deck ahead of time, just to keep things reasonable.

- Set your deck up to include the regular six mission cards, keeping in mind that you're playing against two or more players. In addition to these six cards, you must also include an outpost card for each of the other players in the game and each affiliation you control. Thus, if you are playing a pure Klingon deck against two other players, you must have a minimum of two outposts in your deck, one of which should be Klingon.

- Remember that you're up against multiple opponents, so increase the number of dilemmas in your deck accordingly. As in the regular rules, no matter how many cards you end up with, not more than half can be dilemma cards.

Playing the Different Affiliations

- Players can use any combination of affiliation cards in multi-player Star Trek, but as an optional rule, you and your opponents may agree ahead of time to only allow one alignment per player. If there are only three players in the game, any player can still choose to add non-aligned cards to his or her deck. In a four-player game, one player will be playing a pure non-aligned deck, and the remaining three players may only use cards from their respective empires.

Deciding the Order of Play

- In a standard game of Star Trek, determining the order of play is simple. In a multi-player game however, the process is less obvious. The easiest way to decide order of play is to pick one player to begin the game, and have the remaining players take their turn in a clockwise fashion around the table. The first player can be randomly chosen by having one of the players pick one card from his or her deck for each of the players. All but one of the cards should be of the same type (two ships and one character card, for example). The first player is determined by placing this hand of cards face down on the table, and having each player pick a card; the player who chooses the different card goes first.

- If this is the second or third game the group has played in a row, you may wish simply allow the

ST: TNG CUSTOMIZABLE CARD GAME

player with the worst score from the last game to choose who goes first.

Setting Up Spacelines

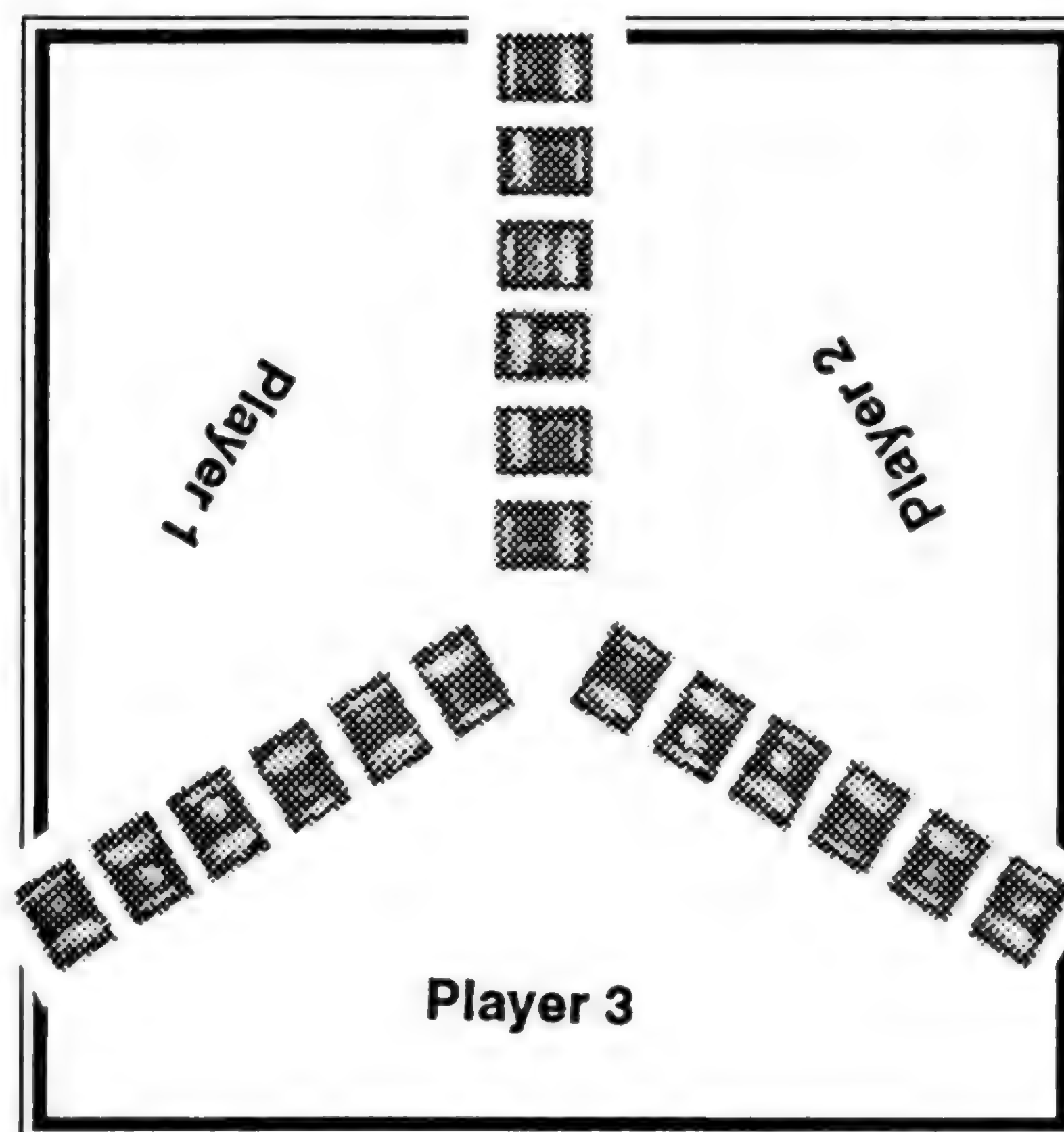
Once a turn order has been determined, each player randomly places a mission card on the table, as per the basic rules of the game. In a three-player game each player controls the same number of missions but has to share half of his or her spaceline with the other two players. The players lay their cards on the table, forming their cards in the shape of a Y, with each player occupying a space in one of the openings. Thus, each player will have one arm of the Y to their left, and the other to their right. The spacelines represent the disputed worlds and space regions along the borders between the empires controlled by the players.

The spaceline is shared between the three players with a broad Neutral Zone designating the Hub of the Border Worlds where all three empires meet. This Hub is treated the same as any other space between missions for the purpose of travel or cards which affect Lane spaces. For example, a Q-net will only separate two missions, not all three of the missions that define the boundaries of the Hub.

You can move through any of the arms of the Y shape by travelling through the Hub. Conceivably, a player may move up an arm which does not contain any of his missions, perhaps to launch a pre-emptive strike on an opponent (a clear violation of any treaties, allowing Federation players to launch assaults). In this case the encroaching player is designated the Visitor.

Visitors must play their cards across the spaceline so that the two other players can distinguish their cards from the Visitor's.

In a four-player game an X shape is used. There will be players who do not share a spaceline, except at the Hub. Visitors in a four-player game must be more careful with their cards, as it will be easy to confuse cards on missions where all four players are present. In this situation, all cards should be designated as facing a specific edge of the mission card: Up, Down, Right and Left. Seeding the lanes is unchanged from the basic game.



PHASE 2: PLAYING THE GAME

Game play remains as normal, with the following exceptions:

- Each player makes his or her moves in sequence, moving clockwise around the table. (See the basic rules for a synopsis of the phases in question.)

Engaging in Battle

- There is very little difference between conducting a battle in the regular game and in a multi-player game.
- The attacking player may be faced with more than one player as targets during a battle. He or she may designate any player's ship or away team as a target.

Splitting Forces

The attacking player may split his or her forces to attack multiple targets. For example, half of an away team can be designated to attack one player's away team while the other half deals with the second player's team. Battles progress as normal, except that a player who splits his or her force has the possibility of losing personnel from both forces.

When splitting forces, the player must also split equipment. For example, if an

- away team has only one phaser and is split into two teams, only one of the split teams will have phasers.

- A player may split a team to accomplish two goals, attacking a player and solving a mission. If the team can not solve the mission's dilemma (without the team's other half) then it is stopped. If the dilemma causes damage to the away team or its ship (such as Firestorm or Gravitic Mines) then the entire away team is affected, not just the half attempting the mission.

- On the player's next turn he or she may rejoin the away team into one unit, until then, the two teams must function as separate entities and can be attacked separately by other players.

- The same rule applies to fleets of ships that are split. Teams and fleets may not be split unless they are attempting a mission or attacking another player. Therefore an away team may not split up after beaming down to a planet unless there are other players on the planet.

- Played cards which affect away teams or ships (such as the Vulcan Stone of Gol, or Escape Pods) will only affect one half of a split team, chosen by

the card's owner. For example, the controller of a split fleet who chooses to attack two players loses both fights. He or she then plays Escape Pods, and must chose which personnel to save from only one of the fleets.

Optional Rule:

Area Effect Dilemmas

Any dilemma that affects a particular space lane will affect any player's forces which end the turn in that spaceline. If two players have away teams on a planetary mission and one attempts the mission and is affected by a dilemma, then the other will likewise be affected by the same dilemma. For example, an exposed Crystalline Entity will affect both players' away teams if placed beneath a planetary mission and both players' ships if placed beneath a space mission.

Use of Wormhole and Where

No Man Has Gone Before Cards

These special travel cards are used much as they are in the original game. Players using Wormholes can place them on any two locations anywhere on the spaceline, even if those locations do not include a border world on their empire. Likewise, the event card Where No Man Has Gone Before allows a player to travel from one end of a spaceline arm to any other arm on the spaceline, even if it is not a border world of that player's empire.

One final word before you embark into the final frontier: Watch your cards! A game of multi-player Star Trek can quickly get confusing if you don't.

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Brian Loranger

Brian was born on the prairies of Saskatchewan, but by age four prompted his parents to seek civilization. The message misunderstood, they moved to Edmonton, where Brian spent the majority of his 25 years playing roleplaying games as a means of escape from boredom.

In yet another desperate move to escape, Brian moved to Calgary and attended the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, studying mechanical engineering. He then travelled the world, visiting England, Holland, Austria, Greece, Indonesia, and Hong Kong.

Today, Brian lives in Vancouver and works as a computer consultant for a local magazine.

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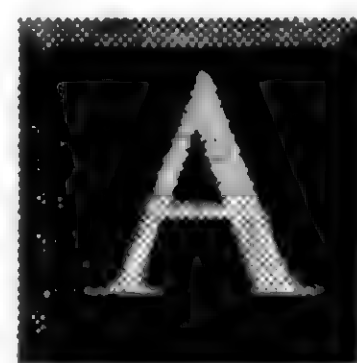
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A Night at the Opera

BY PIERS BROWN



Night at the Opera is a Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay adventure that revolves around the arrival and performances of a Miraglianese opera company in the city of Nuln. For one reason or another, the characters find themselves drawn to investigate when Adolphus von Drakkesborg, the Impresario who arranged the tour, is murdered during a performance.

The adventure comprises equal parts of cunning detective work, the whirl of high society in the company of the flamboyant Miraglianese, rousing sword fights and all the other trappings of overblown melodrama. Although it is located in the Opera Imperialis (Imperial Opera House) in Nuln, it can be relocated to almost any city in the Empire; the travelling company of the opera is itself the "setting."

More than anything, the adventure is supposed to be flexible. As a result, several opportunities are provided for the characters to become involved with the company. Likewise, the plot is free-form enough to accommodate a wide variety of styles of play with equal ease.

THE PLOT

The adventure centers around a three-night performance of the opera *Otello* at the Imperial Opera House in Nuln. It's a pair of murder mysteries – both carried out on stage, and both carefully scripted. But while one appears real, it isn't really a murder at all. And as the characters attempt to unravel the mystery, they may find themselves starting to side with the conspirators.

Adolphus von Drakkesborg, the impresario responsible for arranging the Reikland leg of the tour, is a man in love. In love with opera, in love with life, and (most importantly) in love with Ginevra Maria Pantaleoni, the prima donna of the company.

Unfortunately, Adolphus is married – and not to just anyone. His wife, Francesca, is a daughter of the Schimmelheim family, one of the most ruthless of the old Nuln merchant houses. Any attempt to leave her would disgrace them, and they would be forced to take drastic measures.

Adolphus thus plans to be dramatically "murdered" in the middle of the final performance in Nuln. The corpse will, in fact, be a body procured from grave robbers. While everyone fusses around it, Adolphus can quietly disappear. As the company then travels onwards, he will follow them incognito until they leave the Empire for Bretonnia, after the final performance in Altdorf.

Unfortunately, he didn't carefully think out the consequences of his plan in advance. First, he has neglected to inform Ginevra Pantaleoni of the plan. Second, if somebody is murdered, there will be a search for the culprits, which may not only turn Adolphus up, but which will expose secrets that certain members of the company are hiding.

The baritone Paulo Corventi, for example, is fleeing from an illegal duel in Tilea. Jurgis Hemmelheim, the stage manager, was once tried for necromancy, and fears exposure of this more than anything. Jurgis' brothers-in-law, meanwhile, are intent on retrieving the money he borrowed to fund the tour. They'll send bounty hunters, if necessary, to get it back.

The adventure is deliberately left open-ended. In adventures, as in life, there are no right answers or correct paths.

GETTING INVOLVED

A list of suggestions to introduce the characters to the opera follows. It's important to lead into the adventure without forcing the characters or making the whole episode appear contrived.

Meeting on the Road

The characters are travelling toward Nuln when they come across the opera company in the midst of a problem. Depending on how blood-thirsty your players are, this can be anything from a full-fledged

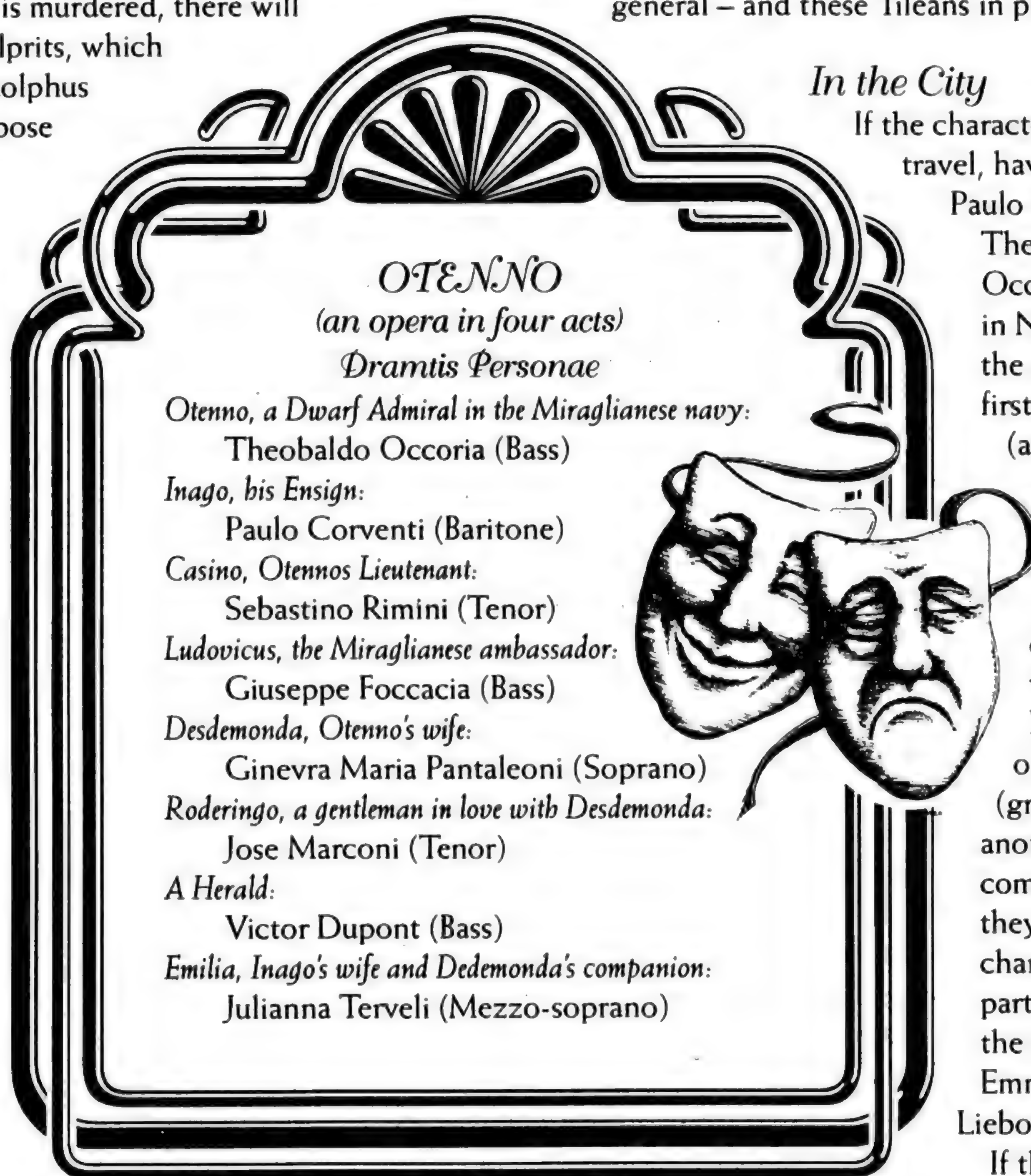
- bandit attack to something as mundane as a broken axle. Either way, the characters will have a chance to put themselves in the good books of the company.
- Rather than letting the characters part from the opera company, keep them together for a while. A large storm and a small inn work nicely. Once safely inside, they are trapped for the rest of the day, the night, and maybe longer with the vociferous members of the opera. This sort of crowded mayhem is a perfect setting in which to acquaint the characters with the highly strung nature of Tileans in general – and these Tileans in particular.

In the City

If the characters don't travel, have them meet Paulo Corventi and Theobaldo Occoria at an inn in Nuln. Drunk on the success of the first performance (and a variety of beverages) Paulo and Theobaldo are making a display of themselves. For one reason or another (gratitude for yet another rescue comes to mind) they invite the characters to a party hosted by the Countess Emmanuelle von Liebovitz.

If the characters complain that they don't

- have the correct clothes, the pair raid the opera company's trove of costumes.
- The effect of the drinks and whatever transpires at the party leads to a close acquaintance with other members of the opera. This scenario works well with the one presented above. ("Look! Our friends... hic! Mebbe they wanna come to the party?")
- *Lest Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot*
- The characters know someone in the opera company who invites them to see the Nuln performance, then asks for help. Set this up ahead of time by introducing this character into an earlier adventure.



TAILORING THE ADVENTURE

Tailoring the adventure to your group is important, while it's good to give players a change from time to time, each group has its own style. Some players prefer violence, others interaction and roleplaying, and so on. This adventure is mainly a character-based mystery. It's quite possible – even easy – to get through it without a fight. On the other hand, you can pick up the pace if necessary.

To do this, cut back on the investigative elements of the adventure and beef up the action. For example, the investigating guard captain may leap to wild conclusions about the player characters' role in the murder, thus precipitating wild clashes with the watch and perhaps even a midnight escape from the city by river. (That should get the blood pumping.)

The adventure is suited for characters who are on their second or third basic career, or who are part way into their first advanced career. However, there's little in the adventure that actually needs tests.

THE COMPANIA

The Compania della Opera Miraglianese is a travelling operatic company: a designation that most settled operatic companies would consider a pejorative. In fact, if an opera singer has any talent, he or she should be able to find a stable position at one of a city's opera house. Those with lesser talent are forced to take to the road – and must hope to precede their reputation.

Normally a travelling company, already forced to endure the dangers and indignities of the road, is further humiliated by being forced to play in towns and cities too poor or too small to merit a company of their own. They become a mere provincial company – just about the deepest of humiliations. Fortunately, there's a difference between any company of the Empire and a true Tilean opera company. After all, Tilea is the true home of opera.

All things considered, the Compania isn't that bad, and the singers are rather talented. Of course, there are reasons why they ended up in this company – reasons that have little to do with talent.

On the surface, the company is happily dysfunctional. The artists and director seem happy to vent their petty grudges and foibles on one another. Practices are missed, sheet music torn to shreds, and slurs about each others' ancestry fly furiously.

This is normal behavior for a Tilean opera company. Given a few days – and the earnest and frustrated diplomatic rounds of the director – a strained reconciliation will take place. Another few days and everything will be fine... until the next crisis.

Underneath it all though, there are real tensions, particularly among the principals of the company.

The Plot (of the Opera)

- Otenno is centered around a minor occurrence in Tilean history and set in a time when Sartosa, the city of pirates, was an outpost of the city of Miragliano.
- Compared against the facts, the story is vastly overblown.

- As history tells it, Otenno, a dwarf brought up in the city of Miragliano, became one of Miragliano's greatest admirals. He defeated a huge fleet from Araby in a pitched sea battle. Afterwards, as a reward, he was given the governance of Sartosa.
- However, within a month of taking the post, he, his wife and several of his lieutenants were dead by the hand of his ensign Inago. Legend says that Inago was a Chaos cultist, and that this was the first time that evil came to Sartosa.

- As an opera, the story becomes much more: a story of love and tragic jealousy. Inago is a loathsome snake who personifies Chaos and its destructive impulses. Early in the opera, Inago has a solo piece – one of the most terrifying in the Opera – in which he sets forth his beliefs and those of Chaos as a whole.

- As the plot progresses, Inago persuades Otenno that his wife, Desdemonda, is engaged in an affair with Casino, one of his Lieutenants. Simultaneously, he manipulates Casino, and Roderingo, another aide, into animosity and eventually into open conflict – all the while reinforcing the illusion. Eventually, stirred to a jealous fury by Inago, Otenno smothers Desdemonda in bed, ignoring her protests of innocence. It's only then that Inago's treachery is revealed, compelling Otenno to commit suicide in despair at his ruined love.

Rehearsals

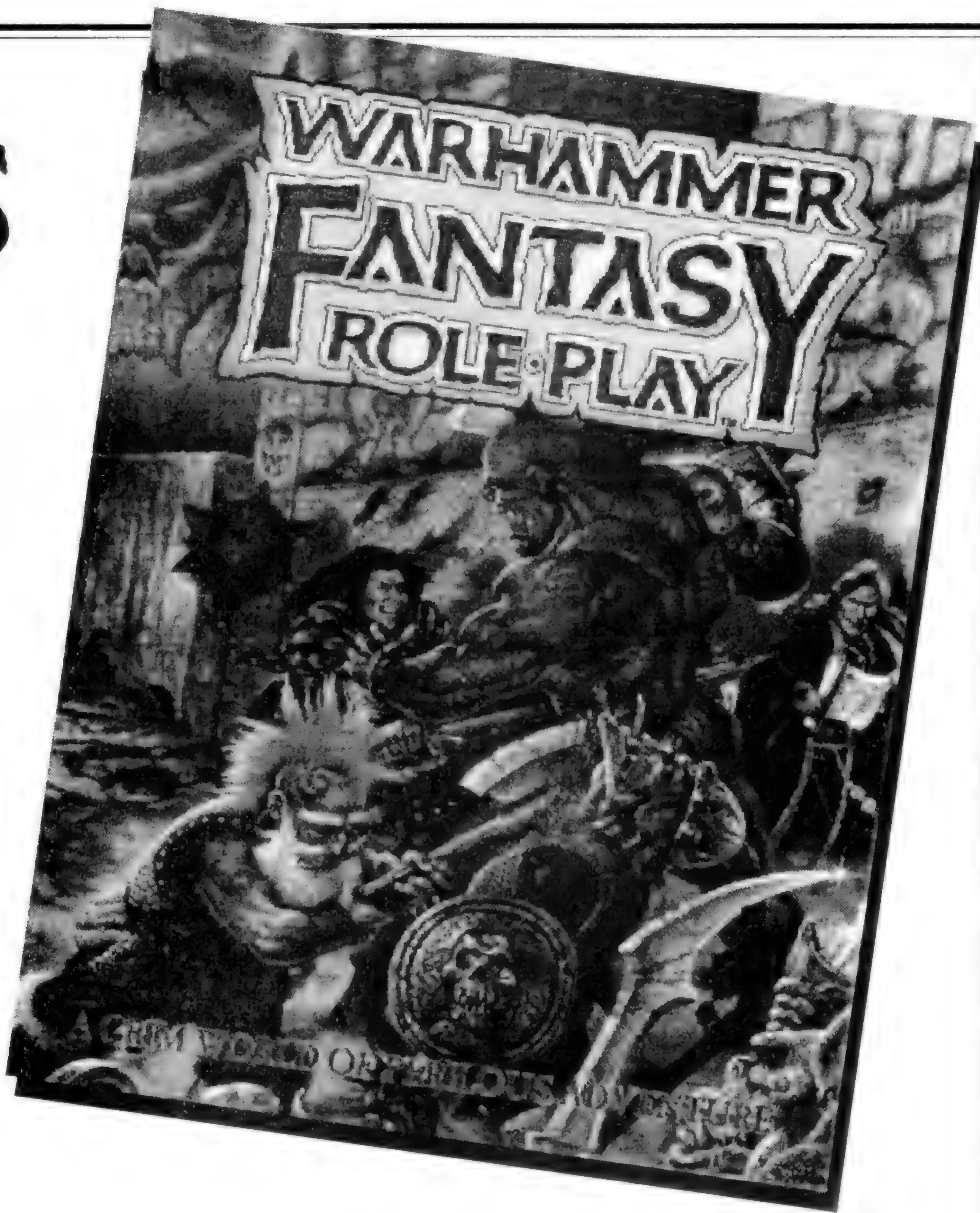
- There are only two days between the arrival of the company in Nuln and the first night's performance. A substantially longer rehearsal period had been planned, but delays en-route have cut rehearsals back to the barest minimum.

- As a result, the rehearsal is full-fledged chaos. Any sort of vague support on the characters' part is more than welcomed. Even if they don't volunteer their help, if they hang around they will be dragooned into running errands. These can comprise anything from picking up the new wigs from the wig makers or costumes from the tailor, to tracking down Jose, Sebastino and Giuseppe, who were last seen heading off to get drunk.

- Mostly though, the characters will be used as go-betweens. Under the tension of the shortened set-up time, tempers begin to flare. Halfway through the first day, an argument breaks out. An angered Paulo Corventi informs Ginevra Pantaleoni that "a pregnant pig could probably sing better and would certainly look better in that dress."

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New Spell: Clear the Fog of Battle by Anthony Ragan

Level 1 Battle Magic Prayer

Restrictions: Priests of Ulric only

Range: Personal

Magic Points: 2 MP to invoke; +1 MP per round after the first

Duration: Variable

Background: This prayer originated millenia ago within the Norscan branch of the Cult of Ulric. Beset by the hordes of Chaos that swept down from the Northern Wastes, the cult godi (Norscan priests) would hide within storms and fog. Ulric felt their anger and gave them this prayer – one that tore through their enemies' protecting shroud. The spell came to the Empire during the Norscan Invasions of the 12th century.

Explanation: Once invoked, the priest can see clearly within a 48-yard radius through anything that obscures his vision, other than solid objects. In other words, the priest may see through fog, mist, rain, darkness, smoke, colored vapors, falling snow, etc. Everything beyond the radius of the prayer, however, is completely obscured.

Note: This spell does not enable a priest to see through solid matter (ie: boulders, armor, wooden walls, etc.). This is not a prayer of Transparent Vision. However, if the invoker is completely immersed in a liquid, he may use this prayer to see out to a 48-yard radius.

Variations: A 3rd level variation, at double the MP cost, allows the priest to see even if he has lost sight in his eyes or had his eyes destroyed or removed.

Her subsequent fainting is followed by another argument in which Theobaldo Occoria accuses Paulo of deliberately trying to sabotage the opera. Corventi denies anything of the sort, but Theobaldo is past placation. A fight breaks out as half the cast tries to hold Theobaldo off a calm Corventi, while Maestro

- awakening at such an hour, it's torture. However,
- for anyone else (except for those who hate Opera)
- there's little better to be had outside a great opera hall. Or at least, that's what Theobaldo tells those
- who complain. If they don't listen to reason, he
- simply drowns them out.

Ludovicus looks on as if the end of the world has arrived. To top it off, Adolphus, previously comforting Ginervra, walks over and slugs Paulo in the face.

Around this chaos, try to interweave a couple of the following scenes, either as presented, or in part as opportunity arises. The idea is to give a few clues as to what's going to happen, and also to sow the seeds of confusion.

Financial Worries

In conversation with members of the Company, finances come up. Apparently, the performers have been getting good crowds and have been paid well. They are worried, however, about having enough money for the winter. One of the company members is afraid that Adolphus has been doctoring the books and stealing from the company.

Most of the members of the company, however, say that they trust Adolphus; he has always been honest and open with them.

Theobaldo at Practice

Most of the company prefers to sleep in, but not Theobaldo Occoria. The dwarf is habitually awake at dawn, and practicing. For several hundred yards around the inn where he's quartered, sleepers awoken to the sound of his resonant tones billowing out over the city.

To those with a hangover or those unused to

Setting the Scene

If the characters are hanging around the theater in between performances, they're sure to see Jurgis Hemmelheim and the stage hands busy with the set. Even to the unpracticed eye it appears somewhat skeletal. All the hands say that it always looks better at night, with the lights and atmosphere.

If the characters are in the theater late in the night, they find Jurgis down on his knees on the boards, working with chalks and candles, sketching out the spells he will use. If confronted, he admits to using magic, but won't speak except in the most general terms about where he learned it or what he can do, unless he truly trusts the characters.

Strangers in the Night

One evening before the final performance, the characters observe someone in hushed conversation with a pair of darkly cloaked figures near the opera house. Moments later, the group separates. The two cloaked figures disappear into the night, and the other person walks back towards the opera house. As this figure comes into the light, his face can be seen, grim and determined: it's Adolphus. He disappears through a side door, locking it behind himself.

If questioned later, Adolphus claims that the characters must have mistaken him for someone else. No matter how hard they push him, he refuses to talk, continually insisting on his innocence.

Attempts to follow the mysterious figures will likely prove equally fruitless. They are the grave robbers from whom Adolphus intends to buy a corpse. More can be found on them in the section *The Grave Robbers*.

Performances

Otenno will play for three nights at the Opera Imperialis – the greatest opera house in the Empire, founded in 1347 by the emperor Isoard the Poet. Performances begin at 7 pm, and most nights the house will be full half an hour before the curtain rises.

With the exception of the third and final evening (and the usual everyday calamities) the performances run comparatively smoothly. On the first night, the Countess Emmanuelle von Liebovitz, ruler of Nuln, attends with most of her court. Afterward, she invites the entire cast to one of her famous parties.

The second and third nights bring out those who come to the opera less for its social cachet, and more for the joy of it. Some enthusiasts will attempt to take in all three nights.

The Critic

- Among those individuals who attend all three nights, there's one who couldn't be called an enthusiast:
- Urval Ulrikson, priest of Ulric and opera Critic.
- Urval is from Norsca, and, in addition to his religious persuasions, he's an almost stereotypical example of those hard-drinking, hard-fighting rievvers – or at least he was in his youth. Now that he's going on sixty, his massive frame has dwindled, he no longer spends days drinking, wenching and fighting in taverns. He is (within the church of Ulric) famous for the incoherent but emotional sermons with which he often bombards the congregation.

- Urval has become accustomed to civilization as a whole, despite his youthful excesses. In particular, he has come to love opera with a passion equalled only by his faith in his god. In some circles, his opinion as to the merits of a particular production can make or break it.

- Urval is rather set in his ways, stoutly defending Empire opera as the height of the art and condemning Tilean productions for their lack of seriousness or deep lyrical meaning. Most of those acquainted with him are well aware of his prejudice, and discount his opinions. Furious at this, he has become more and more meticulous in his attempts to discredit Tilean productions, even going so far as to use his magic to observe exactly what's going on behind the scenes (see the sidebar *Clear the Fog of Battle*).

- The game master can introduce Urval by having the members of the opera company rave about his "unfair" reviews of Otenno. Any member of the cast can point him out in the audience.

- On the night of the tragedy, Urval is watching the stage with this spell and sees something that may provide the hinge to the whole mystery. Or maybe not.

The Countess' Party

- The characters are unlikely to be invited to the party after the first performance. They will, however, have very little trouble in crashing it so long as they are with members of the opera company and are dressed appropriately for the occasion.

- The party provides the characters with an opportunity to interact with the principals of the opera. In addition, the comic possibilities of a bunch of uncouth adventurers, in disguise at a ball, are endless. It lets them hob-nob with the creme of Nuln society, and gives them a chance to see Adolphus with his wife.

- Francesca is the the very picture of a suspicious, shrewish wife, worried that her husband betrays her. With her are two of her brothers, Frederick and Gustav, both rich and obviously pompous bores of

the worst sort. They take pleasure in consorting with nobility on an equal basis, even if the aristocrats look down on these obvious nouveaux riches.

Adolphus' chagrin at this state of affairs is obvious, but he tries to put on a good face to reassure his wife. It's possible that, later in the evening, he will slip off in an attempt to be with Ginevra Pantaleoni. However, unless someone runs interference, it's

- equally likely that he will be caught by his wife. This
- leads inexorably to a huge shouting match involving
- his wife and her brothers, she accusing Adolphus of
- infidelity and they accusing him of financial
- incompetence and a spendthrift nature (a far greater
- sin in their mercantile minds). All of this in sibilant
- whispers as they try to keep the scandal from the
- other guests.



The Final Performance

Eventually, the third and final performance of *Otenno* arrives. Since the previous two nights were a great success, the Imperial Opera House is full with an expectant crowd. As the overture wells out of the orchestra pit, few realize that this isn't to be any ordinary performance.

The opera starts well; the storm scene as *Otenno's* ship approaches Sartosa is full of sound and fury. The opera proceeds apace, through *Inagos Credo* (the love duet between *Otenno* and *Desdemonda*) and *Inago's* slow poisoning of *Otenno's* mind.

In Act Three, moved by *Inago* to a deep fury, *Otenno* quarrels with *Desdemonda* in full view of the ship's company, and announces that he has been summoned to *Miragliano*. The act ends with *Otenno* prostrate on the ground, having succumbed to a fit while *Inago* gloats. Clouds of smoke, backlit by lurid red lantern light, arise – a metaphor for the turmoil in *Otenno's* mind.

Just as the curtain begins to fall on a smoke-obscured stage, signalling the end of Act Three, a loud pistol shot rings out from somewhere backstage. It is followed by dull, muted thud that sends shivers through the stage and causes the descending curtain to waver and shake.

As the curtain completes its descent, shouts are heard from behind it, and concerned questions rise from the audience. It takes several minutes for *Maestro Lucius* to appear and announce that a terrible accident has taken place and that there may be some delay before the opera finishes.

The Murder is Discovered

When the smoke clears, the body of "Adolphus" can be seen at stage left. He's dead: shot through the breast. One of

the weights that counter balance the curtain has dropped on his head; his face is pulped beyond recognition. The death is obviously not an accident and could be nothing less than murder.

Clustered around the body is the entire cast. They are screaming, shouting, gesticulating and pushing, all trying to determine what happened. Vainly struggling on the edge of the mob is Maestro Lucius. He seems shocked, but announces in a grave voice that "the show must go on."

Slowly, he cajoles the shocked cast back to their positions. It looks as if they might manage a strained and broken final act, but it becomes apparent that Ginevra is on the brink of a nervous breakdown. After about half an hour, with the audience becoming restive, Maestro Lucius is forced to announce that the performance is cancelled.

Investigations

Whether or not the characters had access backstage, they will be invited back there now. Just which cast member solicits their help depends on who they are most friendly with. It might be anyone from a tearful Ginevra Pantaleoni, to a concerned Maestro Lucius.

From here, there are a number of leads and red herrings that the characters can follow up in their investigation of the "murder." From here on, the plot is completely free-form, as there's no way to predict where they will turn first.

The Body

This is probably the biggest clue. Depending on how fast you want the mystery to unravel, you can contrive to prevent the characters from getting their hands on the corpse – or let them at it immediately. A close medical examination will reveal several things:

➤ The face is completely unrecognisable. An Int test with +10 for each of Heal Wounds and Surgery reveals that the weight was lifted and slammed into the face more than once, as if to deliberately obscure it.

➤ An individual with Heal Wounds or Surgery may realize that the body is stone cold. It has been dead for several hours.

➤ On a successful Surgery test, an autopsy reveals that there are two bullets in the wound. Adolphus, in an attempt to conceal that the body had been killed earlier with a gunshot, fired a second shot in the same place as the first. The entrance hole is large and messy, and the area around it scarred by powder burns, something apparent on an Initiative test, with +10 for Specialist Weapon firearms.

➤ Another Initiative test reveals that the body's shoes are on the wrong feet.

These clues may lead to the correct conclusion

- that this isn't really Adolphus von Drakkesborg.
- Ginevra Maria Pantaleoni or his wife Francesca might also realise this if they could be persuaded to examine his body closely. This may prove very difficult indeed, as neither is interested in looking closely at the mangled remains of the man she loves.

The Murder Weapons

- The murder weapons include a pistol (now missing) and a curtain counterweight (present beside the body). The counterweight's rope has been cut with some form of sharp object.

- An Int test reveals that the victim had to be standing in an unlikely position to be stuck by the counterweight. It seems a bit contrived. A careful search of the set reveals a newly discharged pistol of anonymous origin near the foot of a stage flat.

Interrogations

- The first probable questions that come to mind are: Where were you when it happened? How did Adolphus wind up in a position to be struck by the counterweight? and, Why would anyone kill Adolphus? These turn up a number of interesting answers.

- The most important clue is how long it took for people to arrive at the scene of the murder. Mere seconds elapsed between the rising of the smoke, the shot being fired, and the counterweight falling. It took no more than a minute before the body was discovered and four or five people were on the scene, and perhaps another minute before three-quarters of the cast were there. It would thus have been virtually impossible for the murderer to escape.

- Everyone in the cast has an alibi, with three notable exceptions: Paulo Corventi, Theobaldo Occoria and (though he may not immediately occur to them) Jurgis Hemmelheim. Paulo and Theobaldo were the only people on stage at the end of Act Three when the smoke rose, but the two of them couldn't see each other. Theobaldo was prostrate on the ground and Paulo was leaving stage center. Neither were far from the left of the stage where the murder occurred. Both categorically deny anything and neither admits to seeing anyone.

- Jurgis was sequestered from the whole occurrence high up in a box above the stage – or at least, that's where he says he was. If pressed, he admits that he was there to supervise the illusions that formed most of the set. He too denies anything to do with the murder, but the very fact that he's a magician may count against him.

- Adolphus' movements on the night in question are easy to discover. He was supposed to watch the performance from one of the boxes with his wife, but there was some sort of argument. Not long after the

first act, he was seen wandering around the back of the stage, looking worried.

Midway through the second act, a pair of suspicious looking visitors arrived at the back door of the opera house. They asked to see Adolphus, but Mateo, who was guarding the door, told them to go away. At that point Adolphus arrived and told Mateo that all was well. He then went out to talk to the two men. He came back after a few minutes.

As for motives, speculation abounds. Several people have a reason to dislike Adolphus: Paulo Corventi because of the fight; Theobaldo Occoria on account of a rumor that Adolphus was against him taking the part of Otenno; Ginevra Pantaleoni because he was going to leave her; Adolphus' wife, on account of his infidelities; her brothers, due to his spendthrift ways; Maestro Lucius, because Adolphus was cheating him out of the opera's profits.

A Witness of Sorts

The murder is only a few minutes old when Urval Ulrikson arrives backstage, insisting on speaking to someone. He's furious that the good name of opera – even Tilean Opera – should be demeaned by such an act. Moreover, he has seen something. During the third act, he was watching the production with the spell Clear the Fog of Battle. Amid the darkness and the illusions he saw an object about the size of a body "float" across the stage. He doesn't know what this means, but he wants to help.

This observation points to magic, and Jurgis may come under very close scrutiny as a result. Most of the cast is aware of his talents, though they stayed quiet on his behalf. Now their suspicion that he's a murderer loosens their tongues.

- Urval's observation means that neither Corventi or Occoria could have been responsible for the murder, for they were on stage in full view at the time – a fact to which Urval can attest.

How it was Done

- Adolphus bought a body off the grave robbers at the back door and snuck it into the theatre through a side entrance. Having dressed the corpse in his clothes, he set out to "murder" it. He had, some month's previously, obtained a Potion of Invisibility off Jurgis. He used it to hide his actions.

Waiting until the lights went down at the end of Act Three, he carried the body on stage, shot it, dropped the weight onto it – then hit it again with the weight to further obscure its features.

He has hidden himself in the wardrobe of Ginevra Pantaleoni until he can get her alone and tell her he's still alive. He intends to flee to a convenient inn and wait till the opera leaves before following them.

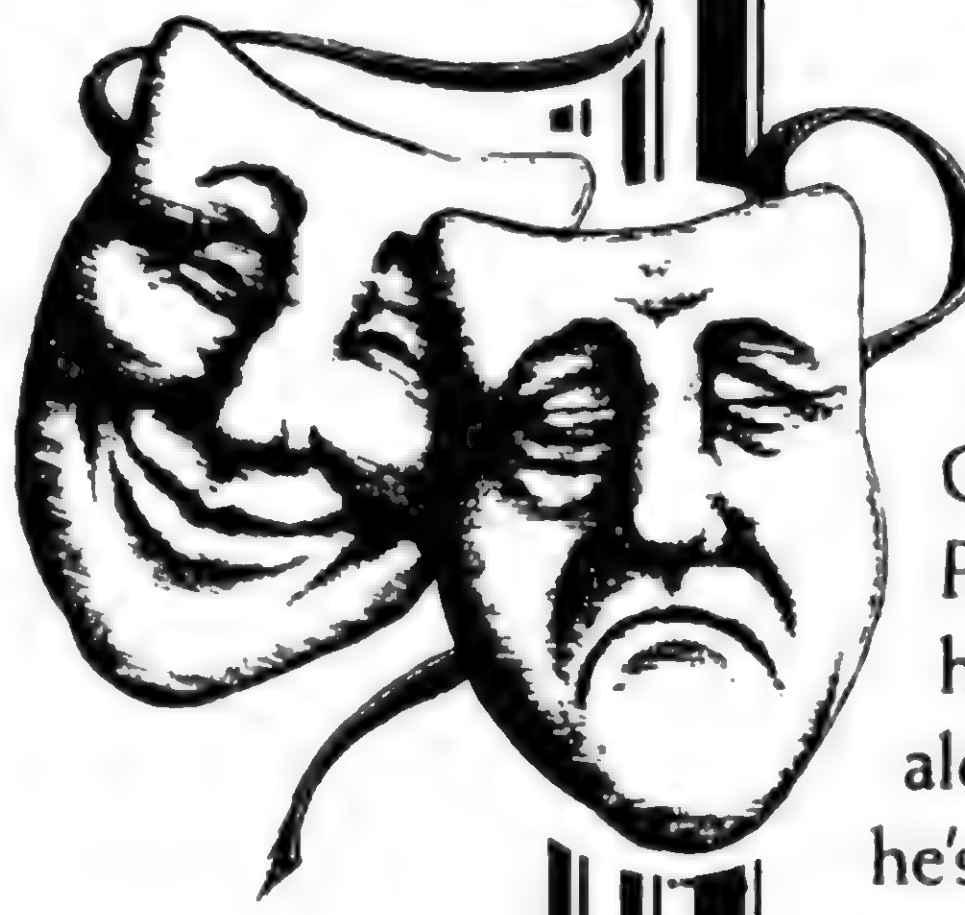
The Long Arm of the Law

About an hour after the murder, the watch arrives. It's represented in this case

- by Captain Otto Meerscham and a pair of watchmen. Pipe clamped between his teeth, he wastes no time attempting to get to the bottom of the murder. It should be a race against time to see whether the characters can figure out the mystery before he does.

Angry In-Laws

- Around the same time the law arrives, so do Adolphus' brothers in law. They insist on getting into



*New Career
Opera Singer*

Opera singers have a more settled life than most careers in the Old World – unless, of course, they end up in a travelling company. To them, everything rests on their ability to sing and their popularity, often to the detriment of everything else. Unfortunately for the state of the art, acting ability is often deemed optional. It's a precarious career, and many opera singers find themselves forced into other careers when their popularity wanes.

WS +10; T +2; W +3; I +10;
Ld +20; Cl +10; Fel +30.

Skills: Sing, Charm, Etiquette, Seduction, Specialist Weapon (Fencing Sword), Very Resilient.

Notes: Opera singers can take the skill Sing repeatedly, in the same manner that thieves can take Pick Locks and Pick Pockets repeatedly.

Trappings: Membership in an Opera Company.

his office and seeing his books; they want their share of his money. Maestro Lucius is in no position to stop them, as he's busy escorting the remnants of the audience out.

It becomes apparent that Adolphus has been doctoring the books. Far from being profitable, the company has been losing money steadily. The brothers would happily kill Adolphus if he were still alive. They disappear in a cloud of rage.

The Grave Robbers

The mysterious figures seen earlier talking to Adolphus are bound to raise some suspicion. They're long gone, and it's almost impossible to find anything without the help of the watch.

Meerscham, when given their description, immediately recognises them as petty thieves – although he does *not* realize that they have turned to grave robbing.

Whether this puts Meerscham on the right or wrong track is up to you. The characters will have to draw their own conclusions.

Jurgis at Bay

Jurgis quickly realizes that things look bad for him. Should the characters confront him, he breaks down and tell them everything about his past conviction for necromancy. He begs the characters to save him. (Should they ask Maestro Lucius for advice, he will put in a good word for the man.)

If the characters think to ask about what Urval saw, Jurgis says that it sounds as though a potion of invisibility were used to carry the body of Adolphus onto the stage. He adds that the last potion he made he gave to Adolphus himself.

FINALE

By now, the players will either be deeply confused or sure of what has happened but unsure how to proceed. While they are in the dressing rooms, Ginevra shrieks and runs from her room, claiming to have seen a ghost. Investigation proves that Adolphus is in fact quite alive. He's almost assaulted by any cast members present, but after they are calmed down he's frantically apologetic.

He explains the whole plot and how it was meant to allow him to escape his wife and to flee with his love. He's horrified by the turn it has taken and the fact that innocent people have been accused.

By this point, he has gained the sympathy of any cast members present – Tileans are romantics at heart. They begin to warm even more visibly when he reveals that his accounts lied too. He has the profits hidden in a trunk in the cellar and is willing to share them with the cast.

The last scenes can be run one of two ways:

- either as a death-defying attempt to escape the bewildered clutches of the law, or as an attempt to cast the blame for the "murder" in some other direction (Adolphus' brothers in law present a likely target) and thus preserve the company as a whole.

- Either way you are on your own. It's impossible to predict the tricks and stratagems or downright idiocy of players. Give it all it's worth. You owe them a rousing finish.

Curtain Call

- Should they succeed, the characters will make lasting friends of the Compagnia della Opera Miraglianese. The company can provide a useful resource in times to come and can be an interesting and entertaining recurring set of characters.

- The characters' status in the city of Nuln may be precarious, depending on how they leave. They may well have made enemies in the form of the Schimmelheim family.

- Adolphus, at least, will be grateful, and will pay 100 GCs to each character if they help him. The rest of the company will also likely be willing to teach the characters skill and even spells (in the case of Jurgis) should they travel together for a time.

- The company is heading towards Bretonnia next, with a performance in Estalia before they return to Tiela. The characters may wish to go along. It's a chance to see the world, perhaps even to step on stage.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Adolphus von Drakkesborg

- Impoverished Noble and Impresario

- Although 52, Adolphus von Drakkesborg seems in the prime of his life. He is bursting with energy and enthusiasm for his beloved opera. In quieter moments it's obvious that he's under a great deal of pressure.

- Adolphus stands only 5'6" in his boots. His hair is tinged with gray, and the lines around his eyes are deepened by shadows. He hides secrets from his closest friends as he makes ready to escape the trap his life has become.

- M WS BS S T W I A Dex Ld Cl WP Fel
4 37 35 3 3 9 42 1 41 53 44 55 54

- Skills: Blather, Bribery, Charm, Embezzling, Etiquette, Haggle, Heraldry, Luck, Public Speaking, Read/Write, Ride, Seduction, Speak Tilean, Wit.

Ginevra Maria Pantaleoni

- Soprano (Desdemonda)

- Now fifty, Ginevra Maria Pantaleoni is the picture of slightly bloated decay; her makeup is unable to conceal her age. Yet she still clings to her

faded glory, hearkening back to the years when she was one of the most feted singers in all Tilea.

While up close her age shows and her voice is beginning to falter, on stage she can still exert her fabled charisma. But it seems that there's nowhere else for her to go but down. In a bid to regain her lost youth, she has flung herself into her affair with Adolphus, with the enthusiasm of a woman one-third her age.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	38	34	4	6	12	31	1	35	50	34	27	44	58



- **Skills:** Sing (x4), Charm, Etiquette, Musicianship, Seduction, Wit.
- **Trappings:** Fantastic brocade and silk dresses, and fabulous jewelry.

Paulo Corventi

Baritone (Inago)

- Paulo Corventi is 5'8" tall, and of portly build.
- At the age of 31, he's just starting to go to seed physically, and at the same time to come into his powers as an opera singer. He would be unquestionably one of the great baritones of his age if it wasn't for his incorrigible personality.

Thanks to one too many arguments and a duel, he joined the current company. Under the careful eye of Maestro Lucius, he has so far restrained himself, but how long will this last?

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	47	59	4	5	10	52	2	35	58	41	50	33	64

- Skills:** Sing (x3), Charm, Acting, Consume Alcohol, Dance, Disarm, Dodge Blow, Etiquette, Gamble, Luck, Marksmanship, Musicianship, Read/Write, Ride, Seduction, Speak Tilean, Specialist Weapons (Fencing Weapons, Firearms), Wit.
- Trappings:** Extravagant Clothes, Fencing sword, Brace of Pistols.

Theobaldo Occoria

Bass (Otenno)

Theobaldo lives the tragic existence of one whom life has dealt a bad hand. Even for a dwarf, he possesses one of the most resonant bass voices ever heard. He should be viewed as a genius, but he's a dwarf and unfortunately loves Tilean opera with a passion.

There's only one dwarven role in Tilean opera that could exploit him to his full range: Otenno. However even this has been denied him. The role is traditionally played by a human singer (albeit, kneeling and wearing a false beard).

It's Maestro's generosity and admiration that have given Theobaldo the part of Otenno – and his first great chance. Theobaldo is so overjoyed that happiness seems to flow out of him, yet there's an underlying fragility. He knows that, if this production fails (as he's sure it will) his dream is at an end. Then there will be nothing for him but the death of a troll-slayer, and he won't live long.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	49	24	5	7	13	33	1	36	58	44	50	63	48

- Skills:** Sing (x5), Charm, Streetfighting, Etiquette, Strike Mighty Blow.

Maestro Lucius Imanensi di Rimini

Maestro Lucius is responsible for the company as a whole. He's the conductor, director and mentor of the entire group. Now that he's 65, only wispy white hair remains on the top of a head that seems far outsized for his shrunken frame. His face is a map of wrinkles from which his clear blue eyes peer out. He's the heart of the company and is universally respected and loved.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
2	34	26	2	2	5	49	1	32	56	55	34	54	43

Skills: Sing, Musicianship (x3), Public Speaking, Charm, Acting, Etiquette, Haggle, History, Linguistics, Speak Language (Tilean).

Jurgis Hemmelheim

Stage Manager and Wizard (Illusionist Level 2)

Jurgis became involved in opera as a last resort. It was the only job he could get, and it would take him away from his problems. Until that point, he had been a student at the Collegium in Altdorf – a diligent student, much interested in medicine and the healing of the body. However his interests had taken a darker turn. Magick offered an avenue which would save many who otherwise would die.

Simple sorcery turned out not to be enough. He began to delve into the arts of necromancy. It was fortunate that he didn't dig too far; when the witch-hunters caught his master, they burned him.

Working first as a stage hand, Jurgis travelled with Maestro Lucius, gradually rising in his esteem. Now he's stage manager and, following a disaster with the scenery two years ago, uses his magick to make settings appear far more real. Because of him, the company has arguably some of the best sets in the Old World.

Jurgis is happy with his position, even though he still fears the repercussions if the inquisition ever finds out he's using magick again.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	35	41	3	4	7	45	1	38	33	54	32	48	29

Skills: Arcane Languages (Magick, Necromantic Magick, Illusionist Magick), Cast Spells (Petty Magick, Battle Magic Lv 1, Necromantic Lv 1, Illusion Magick Lv 1, Illusion Magick Lv2), Read/Write, Secret Language (Classical), Scroll Lore, Rune Lore, Magic Sense, Evaluate, Meditation, Manufacture Potions, Identify Undead, History, Theology, Heal Wound, Surgery.

Magic Points: 26

Spells: (Petty) Curse, Glowing Light, Marsh Lights,

Sounds, (Battle Magic Lv1) Steal Mind, Immunity from Poison, (Necromantic Lv1) Summon Skeletons, Summon Skeleton Champion, (Illusionist Lv1) Assume Illusionary Appearance, Camouflage Illusion, (Illusionist Lv2) Hallucinate, Illusionary Buildings, Illusionary Woods.

Trappings: Simple Clothes, Wizard's Staff.

Urval Ulrikson

Priest of Ulric and Opera Critic

Intense, bombastic and boring in long stretches, Urval Ulrikson is a witness with an clue – one which he insists is vitally important. For more on him see the section The Critic.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	57	30	4	3	8	28	2	29	40	33	52	48	44

Skills: Theology, Public Speaking, Sing, Musicianship, Magic Sense, Meditate, Arcane Language-Magick, Cast Cleric Spells-Level 1 and 2, Read/Write, Secret Language-Classical.

Magic Points: 22

Spells: Clear the Fog of Battle (see sidebar), plus any other spells the game master deems appropriate.

Captain Otto Meerschbaum

Commander of the Watch

Depending on the game master's preference,

Captain Meerchaum is either a bumbler or very good at his job. Either way, he's intent on finding the culprit, and he doesn't want concerned amateurs in the way.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	56	47	4	4	10	62	2	41	58	54/34	50	42	38

Skills: Consume Alcohol, Dodge Blow, Read/Write, Secret Language-Battle Tongue, Street Fighter, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun.

Trappings: Mail shirt, Surcoat, Sword, Pipe, Notebook.

Watchmen

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	41	31	4	4	8	31	1	29	29	29	31	29	29

Skills: Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun, Specialist
Weapon: Polearm.

Trappings: Halberd, Lantern, Mail or Leather shirt.

CONVERSION NOTES

WFRP isn't an easy system to convert, on account of the fact that it's less Medieval than it is Renaissance in setting. But in this particular case, with its urban setting and emphasis on the opera, Castle Falkenstein

turns out to be an almost perfect substitute. This game combines the same extravagant high-society setting with an era full of fervor for the opera. The entire plot, including its fantastic elements, has obvious equivalents in Victorian society. All that's needed are character abilities and a quick word about the opera.

Otenno is of course *Verdis Otello*, the great opera based on Shakespeare's *Othello*. It was first performed on the 5th of February, 1887, at La Scala in Milan, so a little fiddling with dates may be necessary. Its plot is much the same as laid out above, excepting the references to Inago's involvement with Chaos (though he does have a Credo of evil), and the fact that Ot(h)ello is a Moor, rather than a dwarf, and is sung by a Tenor. Thus in the following conversion Theobaldo Occoria is Khalid ibn Ibrahim.

Any decent book on Verdis Operas can fill in the missing details. I would suggest you acquire a copy of the soundtrack, whichever setting you are using.

Dramtis Personae

Adolphus von Drakkesborg

Impresario

Charisma (GD), Connections (GR),
Courage (GD), Exchequer (GD),
Social Graces (GD), Athletics (PR).

Ginevra Maria Pantaleoni

Prima Donna

Athletics (PR), Charisma (GT),
Performance (GT), Physique (GD),
Social Graces (GD), Stealth (PR).

Paulo Corventi

Duelist with a Dark Past, Tenor

Charisma (EXC), Comeliness (GD),
Courage (GD), Marksmanship (EXC),
Performance (EXC).

Khalid ibn Ibrahim

Moor

Fisticuffs (GR), Courage (GR),
Performance (EXT), Physique (GD),
Social Graces (GD).

Jurgis Hemmelheim

Stage Manager and Sorcerer (Once a Member of the Golden Dawn, now of the Freemasons)

Athletics (GD), Education (GR), Sorcery (GR),
Tinkering (GD).

Maestro Lucius

Director and Conductor

Performance (GR), Social Graces (GD),
Charisma (GD), Physique (PR).

- Pastor Urval Ulrikson
- Opera Critic and Member of the Order of St. Boniface
- Courage (GR), Sorcery (GD), Charisma (GD), Education (GD).

Detective Otto Meerschbaum

- Fisticuffs (GD), Perception (GR/PR), Stealth (GD).



Piers Brown

- Piers is (though he hates to admit it) really a Canadian, although he was born in England and habitually insists on emphasizing his English heritage. He started roleplaying in 1982 at age 11, when one of his friends came around one evening with the *Dungeons & Dragons* game and said, "This looks fun. Let's play it tomorrow." He has been game mastering ever since.

- Piers works at a comic shop, where he sells roleplaying games and attempts to addict other people to his hobby. He is also involved in a live-action vampire society, the Camarilla, and runs a weekly *Ars Magica* campaign.



Anthony Ragan

- Anthony Ragan is a freelance writer living in Los Angeles, California. He began gaming in 1975, when three odd little booklets appeared in a hobby store in his home town of Sacramento. Since then he has built a collection of games far larger than he can ever hope to play. His favorites include *Warhammer*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Star Wars*, *Elric*, and *Lost Souls*.

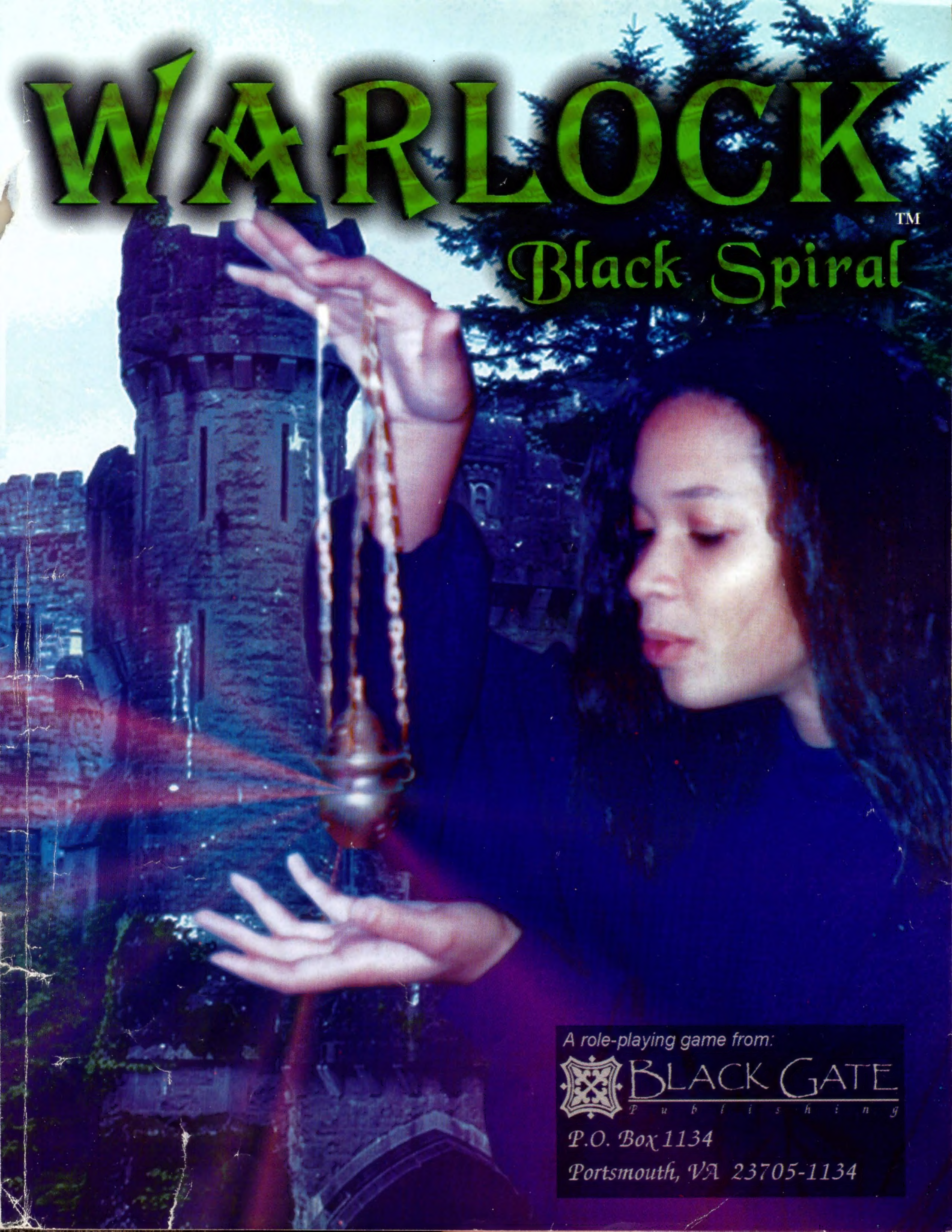
- Anthony contributed a chapter to the upcoming *The Dying of the Light*, a Warhammer Fantasy Role Playing supplement from Hogshead Press. He has history degree from UCLA and did graduate work in Latin American studies. His other interests include international politics, computers, gourmet cooking, and the search for the perfect cabernet.



Gavin Lonergan

- Gavin has been writing and illustrating for the past 12 years, and in college studied printmaking and art history. Originally from Ontario, he came to Vancouver five years ago and now works in the printing industry doing paste-up and layout.


- Gavin most recently provided illustrations for the Bill Gibson short story *Hinterlands*, which appeared in the independent comic book *Freeflight*.



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